

‘*Phoinikeia Grammata*’ at Cos: A New Case of Phoenician Script from Archaic Greece¹

To Professor Maria Giulia Amadasi Guzzo

Giorgos BOUROGIANNIS

The A. G. Leventis Postdoctoral Research Fellow
Museum of Mediterranean and Near Eastern Antiquities (Medelhavsmuseet)
Fredsgatan 2
PO Box 16008
103 21 Stockholm
SWEDEN

E-mail: bourogiannis@yahoo.gr; giorgos.bourogiannis@smvk.se

Christina IOANNOU

UMR 8167 Orient et Méditerranée – Mondes sémitiques
E-mail: Klothooo@yahoo.com

Abstract

This paper examines two hitherto unknown dipinti both of which adorn a small pottery handle excavated at the town of Cos. The inscribed object can be securely dated to the sixth century, most probably to its first half, based on both its context

¹ This paper would not have been completed without the help and support of numerous friends and colleagues. I am grateful to the 22nd Ephorate and Dr. Melina Philimonos in particular, for permission to publish the inscription. My warmest thanks are also due to Mrs Elpida Skerlou, Dr. Dimitris Bosnakis and Mrs. Dora Grigoriadou who have generously supported and facilitated my study at Cos. To my good friend and colleague, Dr. Christina Ioannou, I owe a debt of thanks for sharing her expertise with me and for her pure enthusiasm throughout this study. Her contribution has of course been pivotal. To Drs. Michael Kerschner and Udo Schlottzhauer I feel grateful for their expert comments on the pottery fragments. All remaining shortcomings are entirely my own responsibility. The drawings of the fragments were made by Miss Fani Skyvalida whereas those of the dipinti were made by Miss Evelina Garantzioti. My warmest thanks are due to both of them for their work. I would also like to express my warmest thanks and gratitude to Professor Maria Giulia Amadasi Guzzo, for meticulously trying to improve my Phoenician-language skills during my staying at Rome in 2004–2005. She was also the first one to confirm the Phoenician origin of the script; I warmly thank her for her contribution and I dedicate this study to her. Last but not least, I would like to express my warmest and most sincere thanks to Dr Claudia Sagona and Professor Antonio Sagona, for accepting the article as well as for their patience and support throughout the study.

and its paleographic investigation. Although the content of the inscription is somewhat obscure, the lettering is certainly Phoenician and provides the earliest example of Phoenician writing known so far from Cos. Given our limited knowledge of the Coan archaic contexts, the Phoenician dipinti provide a reliable hint of the hitherto undocumented Phoenician presence in Cos during the Archaic period. The epigraphic investigation of the Phoenician script is followed by a discussion that focuses on Phoenician inscriptions known from other archaic Greek contexts. In this process, Rhodes, Crete and Naukratis seem to provide some of the strongest evidence in support of the enhanced attestation of 'Phoinikia grammata' in the Greek world of the late seventh and early sixth centuries BC.

Introduction

(Dr Giorgos Bourogiannis)

Those of us working with ceramics are familiar with processing large amounts of pottery fragments, usually stored in dusty and unappealing storage rooms. One can indeed think of few things that can become more tedious, or intimidating, than sorting a few thousands of pottery sherds, while agonising over shapes, fabric, provenance, quantitative analyses and typological assessments. Nevertheless, it is often under these rather uninspiring circumstances that some of the most exciting discoveries occur. The case of the small inscribed handle discussed in this paper, is indicative of such an unanticipated discovery. In 2005, during the study of some of the pottery from the old excavations of the 22nd Ephorate at Cos, I was thrilled to realise that the awkward script on a handle-fragment lurking in the ceramic cluster in front of me, looked Phoenician. Given the scarcity of Phoenician inscriptions from Greek Geometric and Archaic contexts, this new instance of Phoenician writing was of major importance.

The Excavation

In 1993, the 22nd Ephorate of Prehistoric and Classical Antiquities excavated the remains of a large dwelling, situated at the western domain of Cos-town, by modern Odhós Eleutheriou Venizelou.² The unearthed part of the building, which has not yet been completely excavated, measured 32 x 21 metres. It was built in ashlar masonry and comprised a central, rectangular open court, surrounded by porticoes and a series of adjoining rooms,

² Skerlou 1993. The site is situated at the capital of Cos, which bears the same name as the whole island.

arranged in a double row at the court's north side. The monumental dimensions and the type of masonry indicated the public character of the building, while its layout, a large open court bordered by stoas and a series of rooms where exercise and other auxiliary activities could take place, suggested it functioned as a gymnasium or a palaestra. Luigi Morricone³ who had thoroughly investigated the archaeology and topography of ancient Cos in the 1940's, was the first to postulate the existence of more than one gymnasia for the affluent Coan city of the late Classical and Hellenistic periods, where different age groups could train separately. The location of the dwelling, west of the stadium and north of the previously known gymnasium, suggests that buildings related to athletic activities were all concentrated in the same part of the city. Based on the preliminary study of pottery finds and stratigraphy, the excavator⁴ dated the construction of the building to the early Hellenistic period, a time when the new city of Cos, arranged in a Hippodamian grid plan, underwent an extensive building activity that focused on the construction of buildings for public use. This major project was the result of the foundation, in 366 BC, of a new capital on the island's north-east coast, where the town of Cos is still situated. The new location was admirably suited for the purposes of trade, commanding the straits between Cos and the Halicarnassus peninsula and offering protection from the strong northern winds.⁵

Furthermore, the 1993 excavation also brought to light the relics of three preceding building phases lying underneath the fourth century construction. These walls have been dated between the early fifth and fourth centuries BC by the excavator. I do not intend to present a more detailed analysis either of the distinction of the architectural phases or of their chronological attribution, simply because the excavation is still unpublished and thus all conclusions appearing in the reports should be viewed as provisional. What should be noted however is that the archaeological investigation of the area did confirm the existence of three phases preceding the monumental late fourth century building activity. The oldest amongst the three must belong to the archaic or early classical period. In the absence of a complete archaeological documentation of the pre-366 BC activity in the area of the hypothesised second gymnasium, we can only gain a glimpse of the older archaeological horizons of the site.

³ Morricone, 1950, p. 245, note 69.

⁴ Skerlou 1993, p. 550.

⁵ Sherwin-White 1978, p. 31. The old town of Cos, Cos-Astypalaea, was situated at the opposite western part of the island, at a less favorable position for trade activity.

The Pottery Context

Let me now shift my discussion to the investigation of the ceramic context of the inscribed handle from Cos, in an attempt to designate its chronological setting and, subsequently, to compare this to any chronological conclusions that may stem from the inscription's palaeographic examination.

The small handle presented here was found in a section cut to the east of one of the oldest walls (section F2), among a small cluster of sixteen sherds, grouped together by the excavator under 'Bag 637'. The principal aim of the section was to explore the stratigraphic sequence of the area.⁶ Bag 637 is comprised mostly of cup fragments, decorated with horizontal bands and simple linear patterns. Closed shapes were rather exceptional, yielding only an example or two. Even though a secure typological assessment was possible for only part of Bag's 637 content, the whole group pointed to an archaic date, suggested by its fabric, typology and decorative elements. The sherds were excavated at a depth of -2.63 to -2.75 metres, whereas the maximum depth reached during the investigation of Section F2 was -3.10 metres. These deeper passes only produced modest amounts of pottery also of archaic type. In spite of the questions posed by the absence of a comprehensive publication which would allow a secure chronological overview of the excavated site, evidence clearly seems to advocate the presence of an archaic horizon in this area with which the inscribed handle was associated. The most diagnostic sherds found together with the inscribed handle were registered and are listed below. Unnumbered sherds, mostly small body fragments that only preserved a fraction of their decoration, are not included in the following catalogue as their exact typological assessment is dubious. Their fabric and general style however imply an archaic production and do not contradict the attribution of the most diagnostic pieces.

Pottery Catalogue⁷

1. Horizontal handle fragment from a cup or kylix (Fig. 1: 1–2); inv. II 4724 L: 3.2 cm T: 0.5 cm. Fine orange (5YR 7/8) clay, lustrous slip

⁶ I warmly thank the excavator, Mrs. E. Skerlou, for providing me with access to the diaries.

⁷ Abbreviations used in the catalogue are: H (height), L (length), W (width), T (thickness) and D (diameter).

fired red (2.5YR 5/8). Two inscriptions painted in black on the upper and inner face of the handle.⁸ On the upper face, two letters, 0.4 – 0.5 cm high (Fig. 1: 1). On inner surface of the handle, five letters, 0.4–0.6 cm high; the three last signs are separated by slashes (Fig. 1: 2).

2. Body fragment, with beginning of handle, from an East Greek⁹ pottery cup (Fig. 2: 4); inv. Π 4725 H: 3.7 cm W: 3.6 cm T: 0.4 cm. Light orange (5YR 7/4 – 7/6) clay with white inclusions and silver mica. Interior: black. Exterior: black slip, reserved handle zone and reserved band on lower body. Early sixth century BC.¹⁰

(Cf. Schlottzauer 2000, p. 410, fig. 297, type 9; Cook and Dupont 1998, p. 130, fig. 18: 1f; Boardman and Hayes 1966, p. 124, no. 1288, fig. 57, dating from the second quarter of the sixth century;¹¹ cf. also Boardman and Hayes 1966, p. 129, no. 1350, pl. 88: from Deposit II/III, Level 7 or 8, dated around 565–530 BC).¹²

3. Plain rim and body fragment from an East Greek pottery lotus bowl (Fig. 1: 3); inv. Π 4726 H: 2.1 cm W: 2.2 cm D: 10 cm T: 0.3 cm. Fine pink (5YR 8/3) clay with small inclusions. Interior: black with single band in diluted red below rim. Exterior: black band on rim with reserved broad band below. On left edge of reserved area, part of curved linear decoration in diluted brown paint. If identified as an eye bowl, the preserved curved line would belong to the upper contour of the right eye. Early to middle sixth century BC.

(Cf. Akurgal *et al.* 2002, p. 104, nos. 50–52, pl. 3; D'Angelo 2006, p. 186, fig. 11; Cook and Dupont 1998, pp. 26–28; Walter-Karydi 1973, pl. 125, nos. 1024–5, eye bowl).

⁸ Some of the letters give the impression of having been lightly scored through the handle's slip.

⁹ The term is used as a broad geographic designation, referring to the western coast of Asia Minor as well as to the adjacent east Aegean islands. Provenance studies have advanced our knowledge and understanding of these ubiquitous vessels but the details of these analyses are not going to be discussed in this paper. Most cups with everted rims as well as the various types of decorated bowls with plain rims were produced in the area of South and North Ionia, although provenance studies tend to testify to the existence of other, minor centres of production in the areas of Knidus as well as on the islands of Rhodes and Samos. See Akurgal *et al.* 2002; Schlottzauer and Villing 2006.

¹⁰ The term 'early' refers to the first half of the century.

¹¹ Boardman and Hayes 1966, p. 114 (Types X and XI).

¹² Boardman and Hayes 1966, pp. 8–9; 1973, p. 3.

4. Everted rim and body fragment of East Greek, probably South Ionian¹³ pottery cup (**Fig. 1: 4**); inv. Π 4727 H: 3.7cm W: 1.7 cm T: 0.3 to 0.7 cm. Pink (5YR 8/4) clay with white inclusions and silver mica. Interior: black with narrow band at top of rim. Exterior: pairs of thin stripes painted at top of rim and of body, and below the handle-zone. The rest of the outside is reserved. Early to middle sixth century BC. (Cf. Schlotzhauer 2000, p. 410, fig. 297, type 9; Cabrera Bonet and Santos Retolaza (eds.) 2000, p. 298, fig. 14, nos. 8–9. Kerschner 2008, pl. 11, GrK 19).
5. Shoulder fragment, with turn of lip and beginning of handle, from an East Greek pottery cup (**Fig. 2: 3**); inv. Π 4728 H: 2.7 cm W: 2.7 cm T: 0.4 cm. Pink (5YR 8/4) clay with white inclusions and silver mica. Interior: black, decorated with two faded sets of white-red-white stripes. Exterior: black with reserved handle-zone and reserved band at bottom of lip. Early sixth century BC? (Cf. Schlotzhauer 2000, p. 410, fig. 297, type 9).
6. Short everted rim and body fragment from an East Greek, probably South Ionian, pottery cup (**Fig. 2: 1**); inv. Π 4729. Pink (5YR 8/4) clay with white inclusions and silver mica. Interior: reserved broad band at top of body, painted stripe below; black rim decorated with two faded bands. Exterior: painted bands at top of body and of rim, reserved handle zone. Early sixth century BC. (Cf. Schlotzhauer 2000, p. 410, fig. 297, type 10; Schlotzhauer and Villing 2006, p. 61, fig. 28; Posamentir 2006, p. 165, figs. 15–16; Cabrera Bonet and Santos Retolaza (eds.) 2000, p. 119, fig. 2: 12–14; also cf. Villard and Vallet 1955, p. 25, fig. 4 (Form B1); Cook and Dupont 1998, p. 130, fig. 18.1 (b). The type appears in the last quarter of the seventh century, but is most popular in the early sixth century BC. An early sixth century dating seems more probable for the Coan fragment, based also on the chronology indicated by the rest of the pottery group).
7. Plain rim and body fragment from an East Greek pottery bowl, probably a rosette bowl (**Fig. 2: 2**); inv. Π 4730 H: 3.2 cm W: 2.9 cm D: 13 cm T: 0.2 cm. Pink (5YR 8/3) clay with white inclusions and silver mica. Interior: black, faded traces of painted stripes below rim. Exterior: black rim with reserved zone below, decorated with a set of vertical slashes in diluted brown; below reserved zone, broad dark brown band, decorated with two painted stripes. Very thin-walled, gently curved in profile. Around 575–550/525 BC.

¹³ The fabric of the cup looks Milesian according to Dr. Udo Schlotzhauer, who suggested a date around 575–550 BC.

(Cf. Akurgal *et al.* 2002, 104, no. 2, pp. 50–52, pl. 3; Mănucu-Adameşteanu 2008, p. 196, pl. VII:59; Cook and Dupont 1998, pp. 26–28; Smith 2009, pp. 355–356. Boardman and Hayes 1966, p. 55, no. 736 and no. 740, pl. 38: rosette bowls of the 'late form', typical of Tocra's Deposits II and III, suggesting a date between 590/565–520/510 BC;¹⁴ Walter-Karydi 1973, pl. 125, nos. 1024–5, eye bowl).

Chronological Assessment: Conclusions

Preceding analysis has shown that the inscribed handle from Cos was part of a modest yet chronologically and stylistically consistent ceramic group (Bag 637). Cups with everted rim and rosette or lotus bowls with thin walls and plain rims are the predominant types among the fragments examined, confirming the popularity these shapes enjoyed in east Greece during the archaic period. Macroscopic examination suggests an East Greek provenance for the whole group, with South Ionia (or even Miletus) being postulated as a likely production centre, at least for some the cups (inv. no. Π 4727, Fig. 1: 4).

The whole content of Bag 637 therefore seems to fall entirely into the sixth century BC. A more precise attribution, however, is hampered by the quantity and humble dimensions of the fragments,¹⁵ as well as by the very long time-span of the types represented in the Coan group. The production of rosette bowls for example began in the last quarter of the seventh century but lasted well into the sixth century. This marked difficulty in the study of archaic East Greek wares, becomes a considerable disadvantage when looking at small clusters of pottery material. Although lacking a solid ceramic proof, there is no indication for the attribution of Bag 637 to the very end of the sixth century. A date around the first half of the sixth century, perhaps not at its very beginning, is a reasonable suggestion, based also on the coexistence of the rosette and lotus bowls, with fragments of cups with everted rim belonging to types that were more popular during the first and the second quarters of the century. This date is further confirmed by the palaeographic investigation of the two Phoenician dipinti on handle no. 4724.

¹⁴ Boardman and Hayes 1966, p. 45; 1973, p. 3.

¹⁵ Nos. 4725 and 4728 (Figs. 2: 3–4) are of little use as precise chronological tools since their rims have been chipped off.

The Phoenician Inscription

(Dr Christina Ioannou)

The small Coan handle (Fig. 1: 1–2) is particularly important given the scarce attestation of Phoenician inscriptions in Geometric and Archaic Greek contexts. The script is of Phoenician origin, thus yielding some additional evidence related to the Phoenician presence in the Aegean in the archaic period.

As we examine the signs from right to left, it is obvious that their size hardly varies, as they measure from 0.6 cm to 0.4 cm in height. Looking at the inscription, the first thing we observe is that the dipinti are arranged in two lines, one on the inner and the other on the upper face of the handle. On the inner face of the handle, a recurrence of the letter Waw separated by slashes can be discerned. Two other signs are marked before the first Waw; the first of these signs may be a Gimel but the next does not correspond to a Phoenician letter. The inscription on the upper face of the handle yields a Waw and a Yod.

Transliteration:

Inner face: W W W? G

Upper face: Y W

At first glance, the text appears to be neither Phoenician nor Greek and compared with the script of other Phoenician inscriptions the letters are certainly not well formed. As stated, the letters that can be read with certainty are a Waw and a Yod. The form of the letters suggests that the inscription can be assigned to the sixth century BC, based on palaeographic evidence, a date that fully agrees with the chronology implied by the pottery found together with the inscribed handle.

The principal question that arises from the decoding is “why would someone write Waw three times?” which, in turn, gives rise to several hypotheses. The inscription may have been written by a local scribe who either tried to express something using Phoenician letters, or perhaps had been learning Phoenician and was practicing his writing. He may also have been trying to copy a Phoenician inscription he had learned, or one that he had been taught perhaps by a Phoenician craftsman. It might even be hypothesised that these letters are not Phoenician but represent the Greek letter of upsilon (Υ). However, the fact that Phoenician letters can easily be

identified at the beginning of both lines tends to support the hypothesis that the object is inscribed with Phoenician letters.

Therefore, it would be safe to propose that an indigenous individual tried to write in Phoenician characters, which should explain why there is a sequence and a variation of the letter Waw. It could further be suggested that this short inscription was a way of practicing the Phoenician script. At this point, it should be stressed that the inscribed object of Cos could provide valuable information that may contribute to a better understanding of both the life conditions in Cos at that time and of the impact of the Phoenician presence on the island.

The scarcity of Phoenician inscriptions in the Aegean prior to the Classical period gives the small Coan inscribed handle a special significance. There are only three such examples known to present day: a 10th century inscription on a bowl found in Crete,¹⁶ and two seventh century inscriptions discovered in Rhodes – one cut on a pottery sherd¹⁷ and the other on a figurine of a sphinx.¹⁸

The first of these three examples was incised on a bronze bowl found in the Tekke cemetery in Crete. The archeological context of the find dates back to the end of 10th century, even though the letters appearing on the bowl could be much older. It should be noted that the shape of the bowl is quite similar to that of Cypriot bowls, and it is, therefore, very probable that the Tekke bowl was either made in Cyprus or is of Cypriot inspiration. The letters of the inscription were dated to the end of the 10th century by Sznycer¹⁹ and on the 12th or 11th by Puech.²⁰

The condition of the inscription is such that it does not allow for interpretation of the whole text but only of the first letters, for which there are two possibilities. The first one yields the phrase "The bowl of S [probably the first letter of the bowl owner's name] son of L [name beginning with this letter]." The second interpretation is: "Bowl that [followed by a verb in the third person singular] [a name] for [another name]."

The function of the Cretan bowl is significant as it constitutes probable evidence of trading in prestige objects. It is also worth noting that this bowl marks the earliest hitherto known attestation of Phoenician script in Greece.

¹⁶ Amadazzi Guzzo 1987, pp. 13–16; Sznycer 1979, pp. 89–93; Catling 1976–1977, pp. 12–14; Cross 1980, pp. 15–17; Puech, 1983, pp. 374–395.

¹⁷ Amadazzi Guzzo 1987, pp. 16–17; Coldstream 1969.

¹⁸ Kourou 2003, p. 257; Kourou *et. al.* 2002, p. 27.

¹⁹ Sznycer 1979, pp. 89–93.

²⁰ Puech 1983, pp. 374–395.

The first of the other two examples of Phoenician inscriptions found in Rhodes is a graffito of the seventh century on a small sherd from Ialysos. On the fragment one can discern three letters: Kaph Daleth and Qopf. The first two letters form the word *Kd*, which means “the recipient,” also known in Greek as *κάδος*.

The second inscription from Rhodes is found on a sphinx made of Cypriot limestone. The sphinx was discovered at Vroulia, at the southernmost tip of Rhodes and, based on stylistic grounds, dates back to the late seventh century, a date further corroborated by its palaeographic investigation. Unfortunately, this inscription cannot be interpreted as the letters are illegible.

This small corpus of Phoenician inscriptions includes the new finding at Cos, which has been the main focus of this article. The Coan handle is of great significance as the inscription that adorns it, along with other inscriptions of the same origin, provides tangible confirmation of the Phoenician presence in the Aegean and contributes to a more precise characterization of the existence and activity of the Phoenicians in the area during the Archaic period.

Phoenician inscription from archaic Cos: Concluding Remarks

(Dr Giorgos Bourogiannis)

In spite of its rather uninspiring content, the importance of the inscribed handle from Cos is self-evident as has been demonstrated by Dr. Ioannou's preceding analysis. Although the two dipinti on the archaic handle look rather maladroit and bear no sense, the lettering is certainly Phoenician and attests to the purely Levantine character of the find. In addition to the form of the letters, a graphic element that further corroborates with the Phoenician character of the inscription is the repetitive use of slashes on the inner face of the handle to separate the letters. This feature appears regularly in north Semitic scripts and also survives in some archaic Greek inscriptions of areas that retained close links with the Phoenicians, especially Crete.²¹

With regard to the chronological assessment of the Phoenician dipinti from Cos, based on both their contextual evidence and paleographic investigation, a date around the first half of the sixth century seems reasonable. This new testimony therefore antedates the first occurrence of Phoenician script on the island by around three centuries; Cos had hitherto produced one important dedicatory inscription written in Greek and Phoenician, dated to

²¹ Guarducci 1967, pp. 69, 180–181; 1987, pp. 27–28.

the second half of the fourth century BC.²² This bilingual inscription was not found *in situ* but only partly preserved and re-used as building material in an old house at the town of Cos. The Phoenician text mentions Abdalonymus, who was appointed as king of Sidon by Alexander the Great in 332 BC, and commemorates his offer to his mistress, Astarte, hence witnessing the worship of Astarte-Aphrodite in fourth century BC Cos.²³

The late seventh and early sixth centuries BC are marked by the enhanced occurrence of the Phoenician script in the Dodecanese,²⁴ further corroborated by the two already mentioned examples from Rhodes: a partially preserved graffito on a small body sherd from Ialysos preserving the word '*kd*', and an eroded, almost illegible inscription incised on the outer face of the right wing of a seated sphinx from Vroulia, made of soft Cypriot limestone. Admittedly, unlike the extensive archaeological as well as historical documentation of the Phoenician presence in Geometric and early Archaic Rhodes, Cos displays a more disparate, albeit not entirely inconsistent,²⁵ visualisation of a corresponding phenomenon. Given our unsatisfactory acquaintance with the island's archaic horizon, which also hampers our understanding of the Phoenician presence at Cos from the seventh century BC onwards, the small handle leaves the question of a Phoenician presence on the island open to future reconsideration. Within this milieu of indirect or anticipated Phoenician evidence, it is hardly surprising that some of the recent excavations conducted by the 22nd Ephorate at Cos yielded Phoenician pottery imports, mostly juglets dating to the seventh century BC.²⁶ Similarly, the discovery in the small island of Astypalaea of 2750 infant *enchytrismoi*, dating from 800 BC down to the Roman era, may not be totally irrelevant to the notion of a Phoenician *tophet*, even more so as some of the *enchytrismoi* occurred in Levantine amphorae.²⁷ Although not yet

²² Kantzia and Szynger 1980; Szynger 1999; Lipiński 2004, pp. 149–155. On the presence of bilingual Phoenician communities in Greece from the fourth century onwards, Baslez and Briquel Chattonet 1991.

²³ The worship of Astarte is attested also in a first century BC inscription from Cos, in which the members of a *θίασος* joined at Cos to worship Zeus Soter and Astarte are referred (Maiuri 1925, p. 182, no. 496). This mention of this divine couple indicates that Zeus Soter was the Greek equivalent of Baal, worshipped by the Phoenician residents of Cos alongside Astarte. His cult was officially inaugurated on the island in the third century BC (Sherwin-White 1978, p. 108 and p. 111). See also Lipiński 2004, pp. 154–155.

²⁴ It is hardly surprising that such evidence occurs at a period when the Orientalising movement has reached its peak in the Aegean. For a recent discussion of the Orientalising phenomenon, Croissant and D'Ercole 2010.

²⁵ Bourogiannis 2000; 2009; Bourogiannis (forthcoming).

²⁶ This material remains unpublished. I am grateful to Mrs Elpida Skerlou for sharing this information with me.

²⁷ Michalaki-Kollia 2010, pp. 178, 199, fig. 15.

fully published, this extraordinary discovery adds a further element in support of the postulated Phoenician presence in the Dodecanese during the Geometric and Archaic periods.

Rhodes is of course not the sole geographic entity to provide us with a chronologically equivalent phenomenon for the inscribed handle from Cos. Situated on the Canopic branch of the Nile Delta, Naukratis has yielded what may be viewed as the best comparandum for the Coan handle, a Phoenician graffito on an East Dorian, probably Knidian cup, excavated in the 1880s at the sanctuary of Apollo.²⁸ The cup is characterised by a short everted rim and a low conical foot, and dates to the early sixth century BC, hence contemporary to the inscribed Coan handle.²⁹ The Phoenician graffito from Naukratis was seen as 'a further instance of the cosmopolitan nature of trade around the Mediterranean'.³⁰ Three Phoenician letters, a Kaph, a Lamed and a Taw, and part of a fourth one that has not been identified with certainty, are incised in an awkward vertical arrangement under the reserved handle-zone of the vessel. The content of the graffito is not entirely unproblematic, but it seems to refer to the vessel as a measuring unit or to its volume capacity. Given Naukratis' close commercial and cultural links with the east Greek world, of which Cos was a prominent member, it may be postulated that in the early sixth century, Cos and Naukratis were stopovers of the same Phoenician sailing-routes that linked the Nile Delta to the east Greek world via Crete and Rhodes.

Admittedly, the interpretation of the Coan find is a more intricate assignment. The repetitive use of the same alphabetic signs is hitherto unique among the scarce Phoenician inscriptions that are known from geometric and archaic Aegean contexts. In the absence of a straightforward clarification however, either of the nature or of the function of the inscribed handle, Dr. Ioannou's suggestion provides an attractive possible interpretation: the handle portrays an attempt, albeit with moderate success, to gain familiarity with the Phoenician script. Defining the instigator of the action itself however is far more complex and any suggestions presented here ought to be viewed as tentative.

Would we be right to envisage a Greek inhabitant of Cos, reproducing –for whatever reason– some of the actual Phoenician letters, or should the dipinti be associated with an (infant?) member of a small Phoenician com-

²⁸ Schlotzhauer 2006, pp. 301–307, 316 figs. 4–6; Schlotzhauer and Villing 2006, p. 60, fig. 24 (British Museum, 1884.0401.96).

²⁹ East Dorian cups of similar typology are also known from Rhodes and it would be hardly surprising if they also lurk among the bulks of unpublished archaic pottery from Cos.

³⁰ Schlotzhauer and Villing 2006, p. 60.

munity residing in early sixth century Cos and familiarising with the script of its own language?

In either case this is clearly the result of someone practicing the art of writing, and even more so, of Phoenician writing. The sequence of letters on the two Coan dipinti, particularly on the longer inscription painted on the inner face of the handle, certainly rules out the possibility of its use as an abecedarium. The study of first millennium BC north Semitic inscriptions however, reveals a rather complex and varied pattern of epigraphic evidence, associated with the teaching and practicing of writing.³¹ In this milieu, a nonsensical group of letters marked by the repetition of the same signs may imply the mediocre results of an 'exercise of calligraphy' or just a scribble, someone's attempt to practice with Phoenician writing.³²

When viewed from this perspective of alphabetic acquaintance, the Coan handle provides a glimpse of a composite process that resulted in the rapid enhancement of literacy in archaic Greece. In the developing sixth century Aegean, writing had become an essential asset that assisted local cultural and political evolution, as well as facilitated access to the much broader sphere of intra-Mediterranean connections. The long list of inscribed offerings from archaic Greek sanctuaries, in which non-Greek inscriptions are also represented, offers a splendid manifestation of people's desire and ability to document and commemorate certain aspects of their social interaction.³³ In the archaic Greek world in particular, esteem and confidence associated with acquiring literacy is also reflected in the presence of abecedaria in votive contexts. Among the most celebrated examples are the abecedaria incised on seventh century pottery sherds from the votive deposit of the sanctuary of Zeus near the summit of Mount Hymettos in Attica.³⁴ Noticeably, the partly-preserved alphabet on one of them is arranged in two rows, one placed on top of the other, possibly suggesting the work of a master and his pupil.³⁵ The east Greek world had of course its own share in this phenomenon, as in the case of a retrograde abecedarium, cut on a fragmentary cup and then dedicated to the sanctuary of Hera in Samos. This offering that dates to the first half of the seventh century BC has been viewed as an expression of the dedicator's pride over his own literacy.³⁶

³¹ Lemaire 1978, pp. 225–235; De Hoz 2010, p. 73.

³² Nonsense inscriptions or the use of meaningless signs are also used to simulate Greek lettering as is attested on some Greek vases dating mainly to the archaic period: see Cook 1997, pp. 241–248.

³³ See for example Johnston 2006.

³⁴ Langdon 1976, pp. 17–18.

³⁵ Langdon 1976, p. 17, no. 20.

³⁶ Guarducci 1987, p. 68, no. 1 "l'alfabeto esprime, forse, l'orgoglio dello scrivente di non essere illiterato".

Although the original purpose of such pieces was probably that of a gift to a youngster, to provide an exemplar for practicing the art of writing,³⁷ their votive function should rather be related to the cultic activity of adulthood. Usually viewed as the manifestation of dedicator's ability to write, the alphabet was occasionally used for the opposite purpose, to disguise illiteracy. The scribbler of an abecedarium incised on a late eight century loom-weight from a well in the Athenian Agora has attempted to write the alphabet instead of his own name. Knowing his (or her) way only up to Delta, he then contented himself with strokes until he reached the second row of his inscription, at which point he remembered Nu from the second half of the alphabet.³⁸

The Phoenician alphabet played a pivotal and unanimously acknowledged role in this expansion of literacy.³⁹ Due to its geographic setting and intense contact with the east Mediterranean, southeast Aegean was one of the chief beneficiaries of this interplay. Dodecanesian exposure to the Phoenician writing therefore is not a mere academic postulation but it has a kernel of truth. In addition to its already mentioned archaeological manifestation, the memory of Phoenician-writing in the Dodecanese is also preserved in the work of Diodorus.⁴⁰ Cadmus, an emblematic figure in the story of introduction of the alphabetic script in Greece,⁴¹ offered a bronze lebes in the sanctuary of Athena at Lindos, Rhodes. The lebes carried an inscription written in Phoenician letters. The prominence of this votive offering, further highlighted by its Phoenician inscription, is reconfirmed by the Chronicle of Lindos,⁴² which associates the preservation of this tradition with Polyzalos. Dating to 99 BC, the Lindian Chronicle lists the inscribed lebes among the most prestigious mythical and historical dedications offered to the sanctuary of Athena: Κάδμος λέβητα χαλκῆον φοινικικοῖς γράμμασιν ἐπιγεγραμμένον, ὡς ἱστορεῖ Πολύζαλος.

It is, I think, appropriate to complete this short overview of Phoenician written evidence from the archaic Aegean with a Greek inscription from Crete, published in 2010.⁴³ The boustrophedon inscription is stored at the Herakleion Museum (730/22–I–1993, E 423) and was discovered in 1993 at the site of Eltyna, about nine kilometres south of Knossos. It was not

³⁷ Wachter 2001, p. 282, §315.

³⁸ Brann 1961, p. 146, R22, pl. 23; Immerwahr 1990, p. 8, no. 3.

³⁹ Baurain *et al.* 1991; Jeffery 1990, pp. 1–42; Guarducci 1987, pp. 10–33; De Hoz 2010.

⁴⁰ Diodorus Siculus 5, 58, 3: Οὗτος δ'εἶχεν ἐπιγραφὴν φοινικικοῖς γράμμασιν, ἃ φασιν πρῶτον ἐκ Φοινίκης ἐς τὴν Ἑλλάδα κομισθῆναι.

⁴¹ Gruen 2011, pp. 233–236.

⁴² Higbie 2003, pp. 70–72.

⁴³ Kritzas 2010.

found *in situ* and had probably been reused as a stone slab to cover a tomb, which is why it was located at a short distance from the local cemetery. Originally it might have been incorporated into the walls of a public building, as was the Cretan norm for inscriptions aimed at communal use.⁴⁴ The study of the inscription from Eltyna confirmed its legal character. Given the lack of contextual evidence, the early sixth century BC date of the inscription from Crete is entirely based on its paleographic investigation. Noticeably, such chronological attribution coincides with the dating of the Coan handle.

The most interesting feature of the inscription from Eltyna, however, is not its legal content, only a fraction of which is preserved, but rather the attestation of the word *poinikeia* (ποινικήια) as an abbreviated version of *poinikeia grammata*. The use of the adjective ‘poinikeia’, which often has the function of a noun, does not refer to the Phoenician letters alone but also — or actually mostly — to the alphabetic script in general, as the Greeks accredited the Phoenicians with the invention and possibly with the introduction of the new writing system in to the Greek world.⁴⁵ This embedded knowledge is eloquently portrayed on a number of ancient Greek terms related to the concept or the skill of writing, all of which display a strong Phoenician component: ποινικαστάς, ποινικάζειν, φοινικογράφων, φοινικογράφος.⁴⁶

The significance of the Eltyna inscription lies mainly in the fact that it provides the first attestation of the term ‘poinikeia’ in a Cretan inscription as well as the oldest hitherto known documentation of the term in a Greek text in general.⁴⁷ It yields therefore a sound confirmation, this time from a purely Greek perspective, not only of the increased Phoenician written evidence in the seventh and sixth century Aegean, but also of the firmly-established Greek perception about the Phoenician origin of the alphabet. Noticeably, the earliest example of this sort was produced in Crete, the island that perhaps best demonstrates the connections between the Phoenicians and the Greek world in the Geometric and early Archaic periods.⁴⁸ It is a humble manifestation of such a Phoenician script that we note on the small Coan handle.

⁴⁴ The Gortyn Law Code (Willets 1967) is perhaps the best example of this tendency.

⁴⁵ Guarducci 1987, pp. 10–33; Jeffery 1990, pp. 1–42; Amadasi Guzzo 1991.

⁴⁶ Guarducci 1987, p. 16.

⁴⁷ Kritzas 2010, p. 9.

⁴⁸ Hoffman 1997; Jones 2000; Erickson 2010, pp. 273–281.

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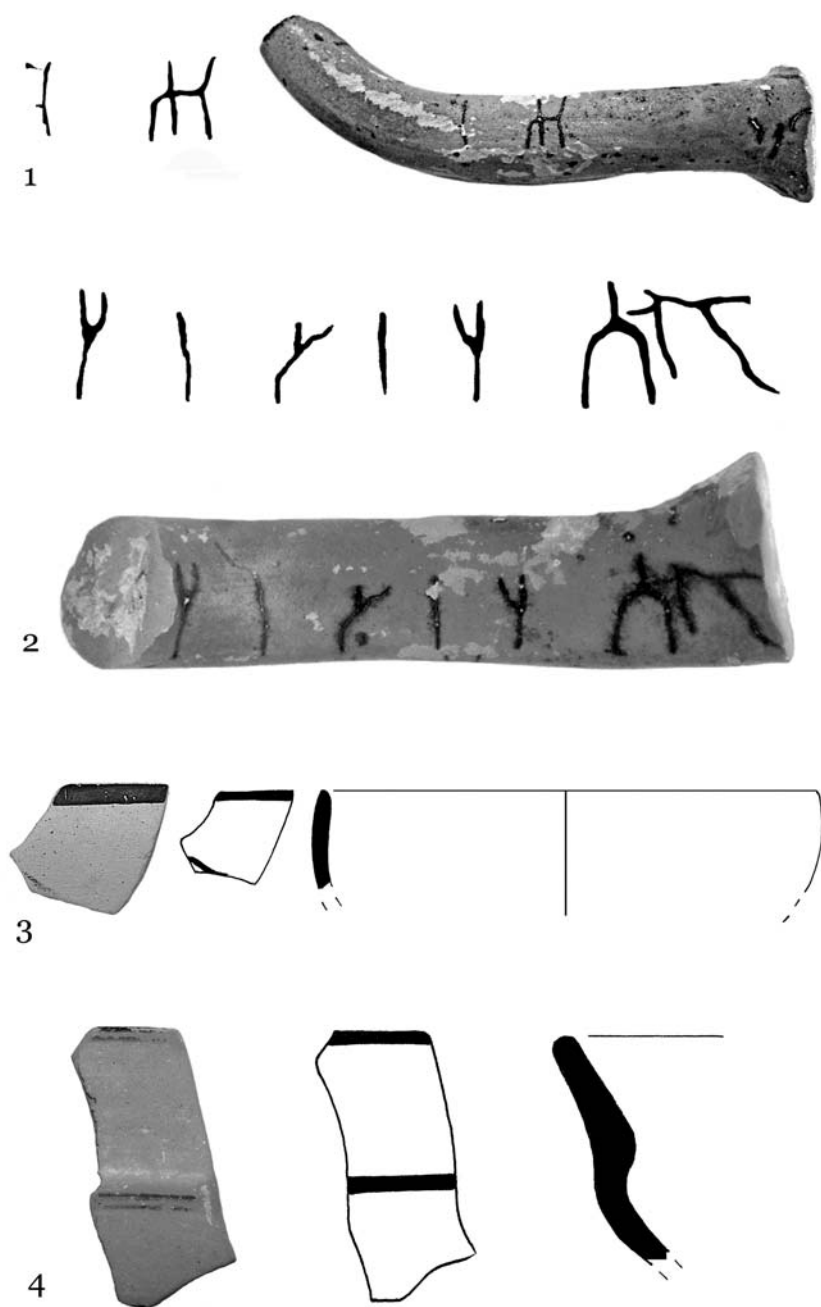


Fig. 1 Ceramic fragments of the sixth century BC from Cos
 1 – 2 Phoenician inscription on a horizontal handle fragment (II 4724)
 3 Rim and body fragment of lotus bowl (II 4726)
 4 Rim and body fragment from an East Greek (South Ionian) pottery cup (II 4727)

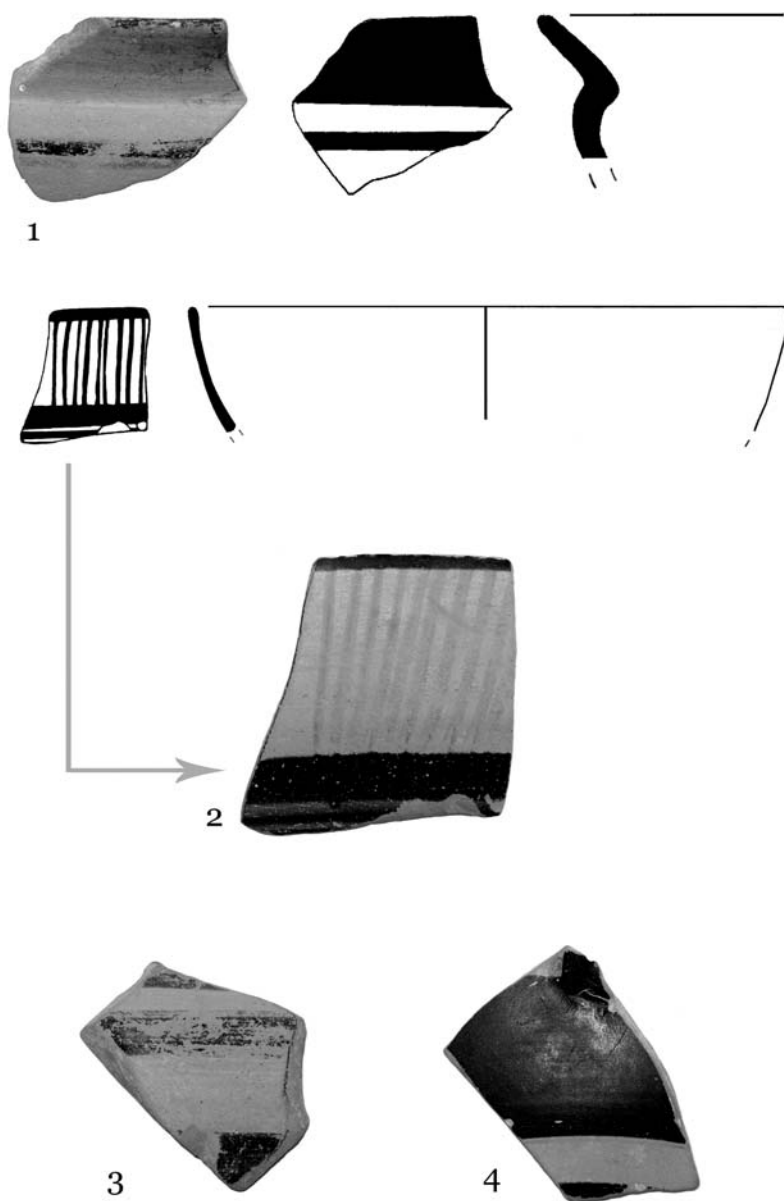


Fig. 2 Ceramic fragments of the sixth century BC from Cos

- 1 Lip and body sherd from an East Greek pottery cup (II 4729)
- 2 Lip and body fragment of rosette bowl (II 4730)
- 3 Upper body fragment with turn of lip, from an East Greek pottery cup (II 4728)
- 4 Body fragment with beginning of handle from East Greek cup (II 4725)

A Re-Analysis of the Iron Age IIA Cult Place at Lachish

Alexander ZUKERMAN

W. F. Albright Institute of Archaeological Research
P.O. Box 19096
91100 Jerusalem,
ISRAEL
E-mail: sashat9@yahoo.com

Abstract

This study discusses the Iron Age IIA (tenth–ninth centuries BCE) cult place at Lachish in the Judahite Shephelah, Israel. The architecture and the artifacts of Sanctuary 49 and of the additional cultic remains in its vicinity are re-evaluated, and the recently proposed revision of the excavator’s stratigraphic conclusions is critically assessed. The article delineates the rich cultural background and the region-specific features of the evolving Judahite cult and ritual practices as revealed at Lachish.

Introduction

One of the targets of the two short excavation seasons conducted by Y. Aharoni at Lachish in 1966 and 1968 was to explore the possibility that earlier cultic structures existed beneath the Persian/Hellenistic-period “Solar Shrine” (Level I).¹ To investigate this question, several small soundings were carried out. The Iron Age IIB–C (eighth–early sixth centuries BCE) remains (Levels III–II) in that area belonged to domestic structures. In contrast, the Iron Age IIA strata (tenth–ninth centuries BCE), excavated underneath the courtyard to the south of the Level III palace and to the west of the “Solar Shrine”, yielded remains of unmistakably cultic nature. Although, due to the proximity of the slope, this part of the tell was quite eroded, in 1968 Aharoni and his team succeeded in locating and excavating

¹ Aharoni 1975, p. 2.

a small single-room structure (henceforth Sanctuary 49) with ritual objects inside (Figs. 1; 2), as well as some cultic remains to its south. Aharoni attributed Sanctuary 49 to Level V, and dated it to the tenth century BCE.²

The Lachish cult place furnishes unique archaeological evidence for the Judahite cult during the Iron Age IIA, and is the only Judahite sanctuary fully published so far.³ However, with the notable exception of Zevit's detailed study,⁴ the architecture and finds from the sanctuary were never treated in a comprehensive manner. The purpose of this study is to systematically review the archaeological evidence related to the sanctuary in order to clarify the nature and the cultural background of the rituals conducted there. The paper is composed of three parts. The first part presents and discusses the architecture, stratigraphy and dating of the sanctuary, as well as the revision of Aharoni's conclusions proposed by D. Ussishkin. The second part analyzes the typology, cultural affinities and function of the artifacts. The third part is the general discussion of the sanctuary and its finds in the context of the ancient Near Eastern cults and rituals.

Architecture, Stratigraphy, and Dating

Sanctuary 49

The sanctuary is a small broadroom, measuring 2.3×3.3 m.⁵ Its entrance was most probably located in the middle of its north-eastern wall, of which only the foundation was preserved. Along the interior walls were low bench-like shelves. A small raised platform in the western corner was most probably the focus of the rituals conducted in the sanctuary. Numerous artifacts were found in the western part of the sanctuary, on its floor and shelves: an altar, plain and fenestrated stands, incense bowls, chalices, lamps, juglets, jugs, cooking pots, bowls, as well as two armor scales and a pin.⁶ The find-spots and positions of many of these finds, recorded by

² Aharoni 1975, pp. 26–32.

³ The definition of this sanctuary as Judahite is based on the geographical-historical data on Lachish (see Ussishkin 2004) and on the local character of its material culture, as presented below.

⁴ Zevit 2001, pp. 213–218, 311–312.

⁵ Aharoni 1975, p. 26, pl. 60.

⁶ See Aharoni 1975, pls. 37: 1–3, 5; 41–43; most of these finds appear in Figs. 1, 3. The partially preserved basalt slab with flat faces and rounded end (28×11×4 cm), found at the entrance to the room, was interpreted by Aharoni as a standing stone (*massēbā*, see Fig. 3 left; Aharoni 1975, p. 26, pls. 27:4; 34:18). Although some scholars accepted this identification (e.g. Negbi 1993, p. 224), this object is probably a regular grinding stone (see also Holladay 1987, p. 254; Zevit 2001, p. 214, fn. 149).

Aharoni,⁷ provide important information on the function of the various objects, and assist in clarification of problems in Aharoni's stratigraphic conclusions.

These problems were discussed by Ussishkin, who concluded that the finds from the structure are unrelated to surrounding walls, and originate from a later pit, and that the structure itself is in fact composed of elements that belong to several different stratigraphic phases.⁸ This re-interpretation, which questions the very presence of the Iron Age IIA sanctuary at Lachish, and points out the real problems in Aharoni's interpretations, requires close attention.⁹ The points raised by Ussishkin can be summarized as follows:

1. The lime floor of the sanctuary did not extend to the western corner, and ends in a straight line that is diagonal to the surrounding walls. Ussishkin interpreted the unpaved area as a robber's trench, and that the robbed out wall and the lime floor were in fact earlier than the rest of the walls in the area.
2. The foundation of the north-eastern wall of the room is on the same level as or higher than the level of the lime floor, indicating that this wall, as well as the north-western wall that joins it and the bench in the eastern corner, are later than the floor.
3. The bench along the south-western wall of the room "floats" high above the floor, as indicated by the published levels as well as by the photograph.¹⁰ Moreover, it is higher (and, therefore, later) than the north-eastern and the north-western walls.
4. The south-western wall is built in a different style and is higher than the adjacent bench and the lime floor. It represents the latest stratigraphic element in this area.
5. The cultic vessels, found in a roughly circular concentration, were deposited in a pit. Since many of them were found laying on the lime floor and on the raised platform, the bottom of the pit reached the lime floor and the plastered face of the north-western wall without damaging them. Since the remains were covered by the Level III (Iron

⁷ Aharoni 1975, p. 26, figs. 5–6.

⁸ Ussishkin 2003; 2004, pp. 105–109.

⁹ It must be admitted that Aharoni's documentation was far from perfect (for example, almost no bottom levels for stratigraphic elements and no bottom levels for the finds were published), and his stratigraphic interpretation, which include internal contradictions, were presented in a "take it or leave it" manner, without an attempt to justify them or to consider the possible alternatives. Numerous unreliable details in Aharoni's publication diminish the value of his findings (see below, *e.g.* fns 28, 39–40, 76). Any discussion of the contribution of this assemblage to the study of early Judahite cult should take these limitations into account.

¹⁰ Aharoni 1975, pl. 6:1.

Age IIB, eighth century BCE) palace courtyard, the pit and the cultic objects found in it should probably be dated to Level IV.

In summary, according to Ussishkin, the stratigraphic elements that comprise Sanctuary 49 belong in fact to at least four stratigraphic phases, and the assemblage of ritual objects found in it originates from a later pit.

As mentioned above, the stratigraphic picture published by Aharoni, due both to its contents and to the way it is presented, is vulnerable to critique.¹¹ Indeed, the photographs show that the partially exposed top of the stone bench along the south-western wall appears to “float” above the lime floor of the sanctuary (Fig. 2: 1).¹² The situation with the other walls and benches, mentioned in Ussishkin’s criticism, is less clear, as their bottom levels are unknown. In fact, many details of construction of this structure cannot be ascertained, since the relevant stratigraphic elements were not dismantled, and the structure itself was not even fully exposed (its southern corner was left unexcavated). Many obscure points remain. For example, why does the lime floor not extend to the western corner of the room but ends in a (perhaps artificial) straight edge? And why on the photographs can several ceramic vessels be seen in that corner, where a bench is supposed to be, and perhaps slightly above the level of the lime floor?¹³ In any case, it is clear that the stratigraphic picture of Sanctuary 49 is more complicated than how it was presented by Aharoni.

Based on the available evidence, it seems that the only possible alternative to Ussishkin’s revision is an assumption that the room is a multi-phase structure and that the various elements of earlier stratigraphic phases of the room, as well as some of the crucial stratigraphic relationships, are concealed underneath the later walls and benches that were not dismantled. It is also possible that an earth floor on a slightly higher level, corresponding to the “floating” benches, was missed during the dig, and that some of the ritual objects (the bottom levels of which are unknown) were deposited on this floor.

The position of the ritual vessels provides the crucial information that makes it possible to choose between the alternative scenarios. The main conclusions that can be made on basis of this information are as follows:

¹¹ So vulnerable that it attracted scholarly attention before being published (see Yeivin 1973, pp. 173–175).

¹² See also Aharoni 1975, pl. 6:1; Ussishkin 2004, fig. 3:9, and a sketch in Aharoni 1975, fig. 5.

¹³ Aharoni 1975, pl. 6:1; Ussishkin 2004, figs. 3.7–3.8. On a high-quality photograph published by Yeivin and reproduced here (Fig. 2) it is possible to make out the thin white line of the lime floor below the south-western bench, perhaps indicating that Aharoni removed that floor and that the corner area was excavated after the picture was taken.

1. The levels of all the complete (or nearly complete) objects, with the exception of those found on the raised platform, are within the range of 262.00–262.20 m, strongly suggesting that these objects were deposited on a flat surface. Most of the pottery vessels were found in articulation, and with few missing pieces, and some are intact, as can be seen on the isometric drawing of their find-spots (Fig. 1: 1). Moreover, the original *in situ* position of many of the vessels can be reconstructed from the position in which they were found.¹⁴ Therefore, these vessels were not thrown into a pit, but were placed on the floor and the benches. The fact that the assumed pit did not damage the lime floor and the surrounding walls and benches, although the finds were laying directly on top of or next to them, casts further doubt on the theory that the artifacts were thrown in a pit. It should be additionally noted that the roughly circular shape of the concentration of the finds has a nice parallel from Shrine 300 at Tell Qasile, where the ritual objects and other finds were certainly placed on the floor and benches, and, therefore, in the case of temples the roughly circular concentration of finds does not necessarily indicate the existence of a later pit.¹⁵
2. The above-mentioned considerations also lead to the conclusion that the surface on which the vessels were deposited (either the lime floor or another floor on a higher level, presumably missed by the excavators), the north-western bench, and the platform are all contemporary. For example, the incense bowl, found on the bench, was certainly used together with one of the stands, found on the floor.¹⁶ The contemporaneity of the north-western bench, the raised platform, the north-western wall, the north-eastern wall and the bench in the eastern corner was not questioned by Ussishkin; these elements, together with the floor and the cultic finds, represent the remains that can be attributed to the sanctuary with a high degree of certainty.¹⁷

It can be summarized that, following Ussishkin, it is unclear if all the architectural elements attributed by Aharoni to Sanctuary 49 indeed belong to the same stratigraphic phase. The somewhat confusing published evidence suggests that some walls and benches may possibly belong to a phase(s) that is later than the rest of the remains. However, two of the

¹⁴ See also Zevit 2001, pp. 311–312, and a discussion later in this paper.

¹⁵ Mazar 1985, fig. 8b.

¹⁶ Aharoni 1975, pl. 43:1, 3–6; see also Fig. 1: 1.

¹⁷ Cf. Ussishkin 2004, p. 107. Edelman (2008, pp. 422–423) accepts a similar scenario as possible. According to her, the structure's walls may have had different foundation levels and were built of differently-sized stones.

walls, the north-western and the eastern benches, the raised platform, as well as the ritual finds, do belong to the sanctuary. Assuming that these remains comprised a closed architectural space, the existence of (at least) two other walls, at the south-east and the south-west, can be postulated. Furthermore, while acknowledging the existing stratigraphic problems, it is important to mention that the walls and benches of the room do create a regular plan and make general architectural sense. Therefore, even though the real size and shape of the sanctuary were perhaps somewhat different from what was published by Aharoni, it is possible that the difference between the two was not significant. In sum, the total elimination of the sanctuary is not warranted by the available evidence, and the separation between the architectural remains and the cultic finds, proposed by Ussishkin, is extremely problematic.¹⁸

The stratigraphic attribution of the sanctuary is determined by the fact that it was covered by a massive wall and a pavement. Aharoni interpreted them as a terrace wall and a street, and attributed their construction to Level IV, but Ussishkin, who excavated the area of the Judahite palace-fort on a larger scale, identified these remains as the enclosing wall and the pavement of the Level III palace courtyard.¹⁹ Although Ussishkin's attribution of the cultic assemblage to Level IV is quite possible, the sealing elements provide only a *terminus ad quem* for the underlying remains, and, therefore, two other options can be proposed: the sanctuary was used during both Levels V and IV, or it went out of use at the end of Level V, and the next archaeologically detectable building activity in that area took place during the construction of Level III. According to Finkelstein and Silberman, it is even possible that the courtyard pavement was laid during the life-span of Level III, rather than during its beginning, and the vessels were deposited during the Iron Age IIB.²⁰ This last suggestion, although possible stratigraphically, is problematic on grounds of ceramic typology (see below).

The issue of the manner in which the sanctuary went out of use is equally controversial. According to Aharoni, Sanctuary 49 "was covered with a thick layer of destruction debris."²¹ In the view of Ussishkin, however, the evidence for this is insufficient, and there are no signs of destruction in the sections shown on the photographs published by Aharoni.²² Thus, Ussishkin

¹⁸ Thus, the exclusion of this structure from some recent discussions of Judahite temples (e.g. Faust 2010) is unjustified.

¹⁹ Aharoni 1975, p. 12, pl. 59; Ussishkin 2004, pp. 107, 109.

²⁰ Finkelstein and Silberman 2006, p. 273.

²¹ Aharoni 1975, p. 12.

²² Ussishkin 2004, p. 107.

assumed that the numerous complete vessels misled Aharoni into thinking that the structure ended in a violent destruction. In my view, Aharoni's observation should not be rejected, since destruction debris are not always clearly seen in photographs of sections, particularly when there are no distinct accumulations of black ash. The evidence for the end of Stratum V from Ussishkin's excavations at Lachish is ambiguous: in Barkay's view, it was violently destroyed, while Ussishkin attributed the ash layer found in that stratum to domestic activity.²³ If, however, the cultic objects found by Aharoni are to be attributed to Level IV,²⁴ then the evidence for destruction in that area would fit the picture uncovered in the renewed excavations in Area S, which indicates the violent destruction of the Level IV settlement, perhaps by earthquake.²⁵

Can the ceramic finds from Sanctuary 49 provide a clue for its dating? The answer to this question is, unfortunately, negative. Aharoni dated the assemblage from Sanctuary 49 to the tenth century BCE due to the supposed simultaneous appearance of hand- and wheel-burnished vessels in it.²⁶ This chronological attribution is incorrect. Besides the fact that, according to the current understanding, the introduction of wheel burnishing on open vessels in the southern part of the country took place only during the Iron Age IIB, that is, during the eighth century BCE,²⁷ it is clear that most (or, perhaps, all) of the vessels described by Aharoni as wheel-burnished are in fact hand-burnished.²⁸ It is precisely for this reason that this assemblage cannot be dated to the Iron Age IIB, and the above-mentioned suggestion of Finkelstein and Silberman (that the cultic vessels were deposited in a pit during the life-span of Level III, of the eighth century BCE) is implausible.

Aharoni published 46 ceramic vessels from this structure, 26 of which are complete.²⁹ Excluding some Iron I sherds and 6 incense stands and bowls that are not chronologically indicative,³⁰ this ceramic material can be dated to the Iron Age IIA. An attempt to obtain a more precise dating by com-

²³ Barkay and Ussishkin 2004, p. 412.

²⁴ According to Ussishkin 2004, p. 109.

²⁵ Barkay and Ussishkin 2004, p. 447.

²⁶ Aharoni 1975, p. 14.

²⁷ Herzog and Singer-Avitz 2004, p. 210.

²⁸ The Iron II bowls from the sanctuary, described as wheel-burnished, have exclusively hand-burnished parallels from other sites (Zimhoni 2004, especially p. 1679). Moreover, even Iron Age I cyma-shaped bowls are described as wheel-burnished (which would make them unique), and a jug is described as having a vertical (*sic*) wheel-burnishing (Aharoni 1975, pls. 41:1–2; 42:6).

²⁹ Aharoni 1975, pls. 41–42; 43:1–6.

³⁰ Aharoni 1975, pls. 41:1–3; 43:1–6.

paring the pottery from Sanctuary 49 to the larger assemblages from Ussishkin's excavations³¹ revealed that the chronologically significant forms from the sanctuary appear in both Level V (early Iron Age IIA) and Level IV (late Iron Age IIA), and it is impossible to attribute them to one of the sub-phases of the Iron Age IIA, because no ceramic types with sufficiently short chronological range, listed by Herzog and Singer-Avitz as indicators of these sub-periods, are present.³² This conclusion is in agreement with the view of Zimhoni that the chronological significance of this assemblage is limited because most of the vessels are difficult to date typologically.³³ The problem is, however, not so much with the limited typological use of the vessels in question as with the insufficient stage of our knowledge of the early Iron Age IIA pottery and its regional variations. The assemblages retrieved from Level V by all three expeditions that excavated at Lachish are extremely limited,³⁴ and the same is true for the assemblages from Arad Stratum XII and Beer-Sheba Stratum VII.³⁵ Therefore, as far as the dating of Sanctuary 49 is concerned, it can be concluded that the structure was in use during the life-span of Levels V and IV or during a certain part of it. In the absolute terms, this time-period is about 980–830 BCE.³⁶

The "High Place"

Additional remains of probably cultic nature were discovered about 12 m to the south-east of Sanctuary 49.³⁷ According to the excavator, the continuation of the rear wall of the sanctuary linked the two locations. He interpreted two terrace walls that abutted that wall at a straight angle as retaining walls of a raised platform – the open cultic place (the "high place" or *bāmā*). Further to the south-east of the "*bāmā*" a large plano-convex standing stone (a *massēbā*) was found, still in upright position. This worked limestone was 1.20 m high, 0.95 m broad and 0.60 cm thick. In front of its flattened face a large piece of carbonized olive tree wood, most probably a tree trunk or a pole, was found, and Aharoni interpreted as a burnt

³¹ Zimhoni 2004.

³² Herzog and Singer-Avitz 2004, pp. 210–218.

³³ Zimhoni 2004, p. 1646.

³⁴ For the problematic nature of the Level V assemblage see Zimhoni 2004, p. 1653.

³⁵ Singer-Avitz 2002, figs. 1–3; Brandfon 1984, figs. 21–24.

³⁶ Following the Modified Conventional Chronology, see Mazar 2005, pp. 21–22; for the slightly later dating see Herzog and Singer-Avitz 2004, pp. 229–230; for the Low Chronology see Finkelstein and Piasetsky 2007. Note that all three systems agree on the dating of the end of the late Iron Age IIA.

³⁷ Aharoni 1975, pp. 28–31, figs. 7–8, pls. 2:3; 3:1–2; 4:1; 60.

’āšērā.³⁸ At least four broken stones of elongated shape, *ca.* 60–70 cm long, were found nearby, buried in what Aharoni interpreted as a *favissa* pit. These stones, one of which bears clear traces of chiseling, were interpreted as *massēbôt* (standing stones).³⁹

The precise dating of these remains cannot be established. Aharoni attributed the “*bāmā*” and the large standing stone to Level V, the *favissa* to Level IV, and suggested that the large standing stone was in use until the destruction of Level III in 701 BCE. The pre-Level III dating of these remains seems to be certain, but the stratigraphic data is insufficient to attribute them to either Level V or IV, and their relation to Sanctuary 49 is unclear as well (however, the partial contemporaneity of all these remains cannot be negated). No pottery from the relevant loci was published. The scant Level IV ceramic material from small probes to the east of the “high place” is certainly later than the assemblages from Sanctuary 49 and from Levels V–IV of Ussishkin’s excavations, and must belong to Level III.⁴⁰ The fact that Aharoni attributed this material to Level IV highlights the problematic nature of the stratigraphy in the southern part of his excavation area.

In spite of all these problems, Ussishkin’s judgment that “the ‘high place’ is merely a terrace with a big stone block, and has nothing to do with cult” seems to be too harsh.⁴¹ Aharoni’s interpretation of the terrace walls as a *bāmā* is indeed extremely speculative, but the identification of the large upright stone and the broken smaller stones as *massēbôt* seems to be quite plausible. The fact that the large stone was found still standing, and that the rest were found in the same excavation square and possibly in a concentration in a pit, is not a mere accident and cannot be seen as a sundry archaeological finding. The identification of the charred wood piece as

³⁸ In this case, *’āšērā* is a tree or a wooden pole that symbolized/represented the goddess Asherah. See Dever 2005 and additional references therein.

³⁹ The pit in which the broken stones were found was not recognized as such during the excavation. Locus 94 originally included mixed ceramic material from the Hellenistic period, the Iron Age II (Levels IV–III) and the Late Bronze Age (Level VI, see Aharoni 1975, p. 109). This locus was divided *post-factum* into four parts, the *massēbôt* (but no pottery!) were attributed to Locus 94a (designated Level IV), and only this part of the original locus was defined as a pit. However, on the published plan, this pit is marked as Locus 136 (clearly also *post-factum*, as this locus does not appear in the register of finds), while Locus 94a represents the entire rectangular probe (Aharoni 1975, pl. 59, see also section B-B on pl. 62). All this does not enhance the credibility of Aharoni’s conclusions concerning the origin of the *massēbôt*, and it is possible that they were not found in one concentration, as claimed by the excavator.

⁴⁰ Aharoni 1975, pl. 44:1–10, including a small deep bowl with low carination, a *LMLK* jar, and a closed globular cooking pot with multi-ridged neck – all rather standard eighth century BCE ceramic types.

⁴¹ Ussishkin 2004, p. 107.

ʾāšērā is possible, particularly due to its location in front of the large standing stone. However, since the entire area of the “high place” was exposed in a small probe and most of the relevant remains were either eroded or unexcavated, any interpretation of these finds is necessarily tentative.⁴² Therefore, among the findings from the “high place” area, only the *massēbôt* and their possible ritual burial in a *favissa* will feature in the following discussion.

Interpreting the Sanctuary and Its Finds

Ground Plan of the Sanctuary

It has been long recognized that a small single-room sanctuary found at Lachish and the various features within it have Late Bronze Age and Iron Age I antecedents.⁴³ During the Late Bronze and Iron Ages, small single-room southern Levantine sanctuaries with benches along walls are known from Tel Mevorakh, Kamid el-Loz (*Raum A*), Hazor (the Area C sanctuary and Room 3283 in Area B), Tell Qasile (Temple 319 of Stratum XII, Temple 200 of Stratum XI, and Shrine 300 of Strata XI–X), Khirbat al-Mudayna, Sarepta, and possibly also the cult room at Ai.⁴⁴ Small sanctuaries with bent-axis approach and benches are also well-attested in Minoan and post-Minoan Crete (at Knossos, Phaistos, Myrtos and Kavousi, among others), where they developed as part of the local architectural tradition.⁴⁵

The three most important architectural features of Sanctuary 49 are its broadroom plan, the bent-axis approach, and the corner location of the raised platform (Fig. 1: 1). The broadroom plan with bent-axis approach characterizes Shrine 300 at Tell Qasile and the early phase of the Sarepta sanctuary.⁴⁶ Four additional shrines, from Hazor (Area C), Khirbat

⁴² See also Mettinger 1995, p. 151; Zevit 2001, p. 218.

⁴³ See, for example, Mazar 1980, p. 66; Negbi 1993, p. 224.

⁴⁴ For Tel Mevorakh, Hazor (the Area C sanctuary) and Tell Qasile see Mazar 1980, figs. 6; 15:A–B, E, I; for Kamid el-Loz see Metzger 1993, pls. 161 bottom; 162; for Ai and Hazor (the Area B sanctuary) see Zevit 2001, figs. 3.15–3.16, 3.41–3.43; for Khirbat al-Mudayna see Daviau and Steiner 2000, fig. 2; for Sarepta see Pritchard 1975, fig. 2. Note that the locations of the entrances to the Tel Mevorakh, Hazor (Room 3283 in Area B), and Ai sanctuaries are unknown.

⁴⁵ Gesell 1985, pp. 57, 88–97, 114–128. The significance of the common features of Cretan and Levantine sanctuaries is an important subject worthy of separate study, but it is outside the scope of the present article. Some Mycenaean sanctuaries (e.g. at Mycenae, see Taylour 1970) have benches as well, but their other features are dissimilar to the Lachish sanctuary. For the various views on the relationship between the Aegean and Levantine sanctuaries see Negbi 1988; Gilmour 1993; Whittaker 1997; Hitchcock 2005.

⁴⁶ Pritchard 1975, p. 15.

al-Mudayna, and Tell Qasile (Stratum XII and Temple 200 of Stratum XI) have squarish plans and direct approach to the raised platform. A corner location of the raised platform characterizes the Tel Mevorakh temple, *Raum A* at Kamid el-Loz, and Shrine 300 at Tell Qasile.

It follows that, although the ground plan of Sanctuary 49 is clearly related to the Levantine tradition of small single-room sanctuaries with benches, the degree of resemblance of the Levantine temples to the Lachish sanctuary varies, and only Shrine 300 at Tell Qasile shares all three common architectural features with the Lachish sanctuary. Indeed, the Tell Qasile shrine, dated to the eleventh century BCE, shows the closest resemblance to the Lachish sanctuary. Shrine 300 was a subsidiary sanctuary, built against the back wall of the main temples of Strata XI–X.⁴⁷ Its interior dimensions are 2.20×4.18 m, and the worshipper had to make a 90° turn to the right in order to face the raised platform. The finds from this structure, first and foremost the three cylindrical stands topped with offering bowls and the two chalice-and-lamp sets, also recall the Lachish sanctuary (see below). Additional finds from Shrine 300 at Tell Qasile are three small elongated stones that were set into the floor and perhaps represented *massē-bôt*. The small *massēbôt* were found discarded outside Sanctuary 49 at Lachish, and the findings from Tell Qasile demonstrate how such small standing stones might have been positioned in a small cult room such as the Lachish sanctuary. The similarities between the two sanctuaries, however, should not be interpreted as the evidence for the “Philistine connection” at Lachish, as the architecture and the ritual finds at Tell Qasile are of overwhelmingly local Levantine character.⁴⁸

Limestone Altar

The altar, about 0.45 m in height, has an elongated shaft with squarish horizontal section, a slightly protruding rim and a slightly concave oval/squarish upper surface with four small knob-like horns at the corners (Fig. 1: 1, no. 13).⁴⁹ The rough surface finish of the altar and its asymmetrical upper surface attest to the low quality of its workmanship. Three of the horns were broken off, most probably intentionally.

The “debased” shape of this altar’s horns is of interest, as such a “vestigial” variant is perhaps less expected on one of the earliest horned stone altars in the southern Levant (note also the absence of collar/band under

⁴⁷ Mazar 1980, pp. 27–28, 42.

⁴⁸ Mazar 1980, p. 119.

⁴⁹ Aharoni 1975, pls. 27:3; 43:7.

its rim). The Iron Age IIA horned altars from Megiddo all have large and prominent horns, while small knob-shaped horns are more typical of later, seventh century BCE examples, *e.g.* from Ekron.⁵⁰ However, among the Iron Age stone horned altars from Judah the Lachish altar is the earliest one,⁵¹ while the roughly contemporary altar from the *favissa* at Yavneh in Philistia, with large horns, is made of pottery and possibly belongs to a somewhat different artistic tradition.⁵² Since altars with large and well-shaped horns are known after the Iron Age, both in the southern Levant and beyond,⁵³ the shape of the horns of the Lachish altar seems to be a result of cultural rather than chronological factors. No matter if the horned altars from the southern Levant are an outcome of Syrian or Aegean/Cypriote influence,⁵⁴ it was clearly a peripheral product, produced in the area where, in contrast to the coastal area and the north, the urban centers and the centralized political control were still in the process of crystallization.⁵⁵ The later, eighth century BCE example of a Judahite altar from Beer-Sheba already has prominent triangular horns, best paralleled by the altars from Megiddo, Kedesh and Tel Dan in the north.⁵⁶ It can be suggested that the local artisan who produced the Lachish altar schematically reproduced the generic features of a horned altar, but it is hard to know if he was aware of the symbolic significance of the altar's horns. But what is clear is that the horns' symbolism of divine power, shared by many ancient Near Eastern cultures,⁵⁷ was known to those who broke them off, perhaps when the altar was discarded and the sanctuary ceased to exist. Whatever were the exact circumstances of this event, it can be hypothesized that the fate of the Lachish altar has something to do with the fact that horned altars never became popular in Judah, and they disappear there after the eighth century BCE.⁵⁸ Perhaps significantly, the Lachish example is the only one from Judah that was found *in situ*.⁵⁹

⁵⁰ Gitin 1989, p. 62*.

⁵¹ Gitin 1989, pp. 54*–57*.

⁵² Zwickel 2010.

⁵³ Galling 1924, pls. 12:17–25; 13:26–35; Soukassian 1983.

⁵⁴ For the various views see Gitin 2002; Hitchcock 2002.

⁵⁵ Herzog and Singer-Avitz 2004; Bunimovitz and Lederman 2008.

⁵⁶ Gitin 1989, pp. 54*–63*, with references.

⁵⁷ Ziffer 2007.

⁵⁸ According to Herzog's suggestion (1987), the four stone altars from the City of David (Shiloh 1986, fig. 7:10–13) originally had horns, and these were later sawn off. This suggestion explains the unique shape of the upper part of these objects.

⁵⁹ The horned altars from Tell en-Nasbeh and Beer-Sheba were found in secondary contexts, see references in Gitin 1989, pp. 54*, 57*.

As proposed by Nielsen and Gitin, one of the main functions of stone altars, including the horned ones, was incense offering.⁶⁰ In addition, these objects may have had other concomitant functions, such as display (rather than burning) of food offerings, and perhaps also libations.⁶¹ This multi-functionality is supported, for example, by remains of animal fat found on the upper surface of the altars from Arad,⁶² and by the drain hole in the upper surface of the altar from Khirbat al-Mudayna.⁶³ Moreover, two horned altars and some burnt grain were found in the cultic corner that was located in the courtyard of a residential structure (Building 2081) at Megiddo Stratum VA/IVB (Iron Age IIA).⁶⁴ Two small (oil?) juglets were discovered *in situ* on one of the Megiddo altars, perhaps suggesting that libations and grain offerings were performed there. Additional finds from Building 2081 at Megiddo include several chalices and stands, as well as a *massêbâ*, and resemble the assemblage of ritual finds from Sanctuary 49 at Lachish.

Offering Stands, Chalices, Lamps and Juglets

The finds from Shrine 49 included four tall cylindrical stands, two of them fenestrated, and two incense bowls with protruding peg-shaped bottoms that fitted the upper opening of stands (Fig. 1: 1, nos. 6, 9, 12, 21, 25–26; 1: 2–3; 2: 2).⁶⁵ Both incense bowls were found in a position that makes it clear that they fell sideways from their respective stands found nearby (as marked by double-headed arrows on Fig. 1: 1). The interiors of both incense bowls were blackened with soot, supporting their functional definition (a similar bowl from the Iron Age II Megiddo also had traces of fire).⁶⁶ The four stands were found approximately on four sides of the stone altar, and the whole group stood in the center of the room. As noted by Zevit, the combination of fenestrated and unfenestrated stands, also attested in Hazor (Room 3283 in Area B), Megiddo (the cultic deposit in Building 2081), and Ai, is possibly significant (see below).⁶⁷

⁶⁰ Nielsen 1986, p. 46; Gitin 1989; 2002; 2009.

⁶¹ See also Nielsen 1986, p. 38; Daviau and Steiner 2000, pp. 13–14; Zevit 2001, pp. 310 n. 104, 313.

⁶² Aharoni 1967, p. 247.

⁶³ Daviau and Steiner 2000, fig. 9a.

⁶⁴ Loud 1948, pp. 44–45, figs. 100–102.

⁶⁵ Aharoni 1975, pl. 43:1–6.

⁶⁶ May 1935, pl. 19:P 5803. The perforation in the base of the incense bowl from Megiddo suggests that this vessel was also used for libations. The traces of ash on the interior of the incense bowls from Lachish can be seen in Fig. 3.

⁶⁷ Zevit 2001, pp. 153–154, 217.

Special-type bowls placed on cylindrical stands are attested during a long period, from the Middle Bronze Age through the Iron Age II, for example at Shiloh, Ai, Tell Qasile (Sanctuary 300), Hazor (Room 3283 in Area B), Tel Qiri, Megiddo (the cultic deposit in Building 2081), and Beth-Shean.⁶⁸ The elongated protuberances that decorate one of the incense bowls are attested not only in the southern Levant, but also in Al Mina, Zinçirli and Tell Mastuma in Syria.⁶⁹ The design of the incense bowl from Lachish indicates that the artisan produced this object in accordance with the fashion attested in the various parts of the Near East.

It should be noted that some bowls mounted on stands, such as those from Tel Qasile, bear no traces of ash on the interior.⁷⁰ Thus, it can be suggested that, at least in some cases, offerings (incense, grain, *etc.*) were not placed directly in them but in smaller containers. Numerous small bowls found in the Iron Age I temples of Tell Qasile could have fulfilled such a function.⁷¹ It follows that tall cylindrical stands topped by bowls were multi-functional ritual vessels, and could have been used for burning incense and as containers (or as supports for containers) of solid and liquid offerings;⁷² it is also possible that the differences in specific ritual function reflect still poorly-known period- or region-specific preferences (*e.g.* Iron Age I Tell Qasile in Philistia *versus* Iron Age II Megiddo and Lachish in Israel/Judah).

Five complete and three fragmentary chalices were also found (Fig. 1: 1, nos. 1–3, 8, 14, 20, 23–24).⁷³ The find-spots of the three of the complete ones (Fig. 1:1, nos. 3, 8, 14) were in a close proximity to lamps (Fig. 1: 1, nos. 4, 7, 15),⁷⁴ and from their position it is clear that lamps were positioned in chalices that served as lamp-stands (marked by arrows on Fig. 1: 1; see Fig. 1: 4). One of these chalice-and-lamp sets, as well as a small long-necked juglet (Fig. 1: 1, no. 5),⁷⁵ was found on a raised brick platform that Aharoni interpreted as a *bâmā*. This juglet was clearly placed in a chalice together with a lamp, and possibly contained (scented?) oil for the lamp or incense to be burned in the chalice.⁷⁶

⁶⁸ Mazar 1980, pp. 87–100; Nielsen 1986, pp. 29, 43–44; Bunimovitz and Finkelstein 1993, fig. 6.21:6.

⁶⁹ Aharoni 1975, pl. 41:1; Lehmann 1994, p. 114; 1996, pl. 30:179/1, 3.

⁷⁰ Mazar 1980, p. 95, figs. 28–32.

⁷¹ Mazar 1985, fig. 19:4–36, *etc.*

⁷² See also Albright 1932, p. 31.

⁷³ Aharoni 1975, pl. 42:14–21.

⁷⁴ Aharoni 1975, pl. 42:11–13.

⁷⁵ Aharoni 1975, pl. 42:9.

⁷⁶ See a photograph in Aharoni 1975, pl. 5:2. If the two vessels seen in Fig. 2 are chalices 23 and 24 in Fig. 1: 1, then their findspots were closer to the western corner than how they were marked by Aharoni (1973, fig. 6).

In the opinion of Aharoni, the findspots of these latter vessels, as well as of the other finds on the bench do not reflect their last use, but, rather, suggest that they were stored there.⁷⁷ It seems, however, that their location makes perfect sense, since the function of chalices as lamp-holders in a ritual context is quite likely, and it is also attested in the temples of Tell Qasile (of the eleventh century BCE), where two lamps were found immediately next to two chalices.⁷⁸ At the Lachish and Tell Qasile sanctuaries, the lamps probably served both for lightning and for the burning of aromatic substances/incense (similarly to modern-time aromatic candles); these two functions might have been performed at the same time if aromatic oils were used. Similarly to the finds from Shrine 49 at Lachish, both chalice-and-lamp sets from Tell Qasile were found next to fenestrated stands topped by incense bowls. Additional examples of chalice-and-lamp sets were found in Tel Esdar, in what seems to be a domestic context.⁷⁹

The possible common functionality of lamps, chalices and incense stands topped with bowls is a little-explored subject. The functions of lighting, incense offering and burning incense can be performed simultaneously if scented oil is used. The use of chalices for burning incense is well-attested by frequent burn marks in them,⁸⁰ by the Egyptian iconographic representations of Canaanites burning incense in chalices,⁸¹ as well as by recently published results of residue analysis of chalices from the Yavneh *favissa* that suggest that incense was mixed with plant oil before being burnt.⁸² This flexible functionality of chalices made them a popular cultic object during the Iron Age.⁸³ Lamps on high foot, attested in various ritual and funerary contexts of the Iron Age II, are functionally equivalent to the incense stands and to the lamp-and-chalice sets known from Lachish and other sites.⁸⁴ For example, seven-spouted chalice-like lamps on high foot were found in the Iron Age II cult complex (Area T) and in the gate shrine (Area A) at Tel

⁷⁷ Aharoni 1975, p. 26.

⁷⁸ Mazar 1985, fig. 8b:12–13, near the raised platform of Shrine 300, and fig. 9:3–5, near and on top of the raised platform of Temple 131.

⁷⁹ Kochavi 1969, p. 29, pl. 8:1.

⁸⁰ For selected examples of chalices with burn marks see Loud 1948, pls. 47:14; 67:5; 87:11–12; 90:8; Kang and Garfinkel 2009, p. 125; Namdar, Neumann and Weiner 2010, p. 169.

⁸¹ Davies and Faulkner 1947, pl. VII; Keel 1975; Spalinger 1977.

⁸² Namdar, Neumann and Weiner 2010.

⁸³ E.g. Yavneh (Kletter 2010, p. 192), Gath (Macir and Shai 2006), and 'En Hazeva (Cohen and Israel 1996, figs. 123:a–d; 124:a).

⁸⁴ Sussman 2007, pp. 75–78. The functional interchangeability of various types of ritual vessels, suggested here, is exemplified by a chalice from Iron Age II Megiddo that was mounted on a tall fenestrated cylindrical stand and was apparently used as an (incense?) offering bowl (Loud 1948, pl. 90:9).

Dan.⁸⁵ Simple lamps prominently appear among the finds from the Iron Age II sanctuary at Khirbat al-Mudayna.⁸⁶ These lamps, found on and near the benches of the Khirbat al-Mudayna sanctuary, most probably had a ritual function.

Bowls, Kraters, Cooking Pots and Jugs

Four complete bowls were found in one concentration: three on the floor next to the raised platform, and one on the bench nearby (Fig. 1: 1, nos. 10, 16–17, 19).⁸⁷ A fragmentary krater was lying on the floor in the north-eastern corner, closer to where the entrance to the sanctuary was possibly located (Fig. 1: 1, no. 28).⁸⁸ The assemblage also included four cooking jugs, one miniature open cooking pot, and one jug (B, nos. 18, 22, 27, 29–31).⁸⁹ Three of the cooking jugs are of the globular type with rounded base, common in various regions of the country during the Iron Age IIA.⁹⁰ The fourth cooking jug, with disc base, belongs to a Philistine tradition.⁹¹

It can be assumed that these vessels contained food offerings brought to the sanctuary by worshippers. This is supported by their find-spots, which are located on or near the benches, next to the incense burners.⁹² The alternative explanation, namely, that these vessels represent evidence for ritual meals held by priests or worshippers, is somewhat less likely, because one would expect such vessels to be stored elsewhere after use and not to be prominently displayed inside the sanctuary.⁹³

With respect to the rituals performed in the sanctuary, one of the most interesting aspects of these cooking pots is their relatively small size. When

⁸⁵ Arie 2008, figs. 12:3–4; 21:7–8.

⁸⁶ Daviau and Steiner 2000, pp. 16–19, fig. 12:1–4.

⁸⁷ Aharoni 1975, pl. 41:4–5, 7–8.

⁸⁸ Aharoni 1975, pl. 41:9.

⁸⁹ Aharoni 1975, pls. 24:5; 27:1; 41:15; 42:1–3, 5–6, note the soot marks on cooking jugs.

⁹⁰ Ben-Shlomo *et al.* 2008, fig. 5.

⁹¹ Ben-Shlomo *et al.* 2008, fig. 3:e.

⁹² For the cooking pots with remains of food offerings, found around the holy of holies of the Late Bronze Age Orthostat Temple at Hazor, see Yadin *et al.* 1989, p. 264. Numerous bowls and two small cooking pots, found on the step leading to the raised platform in the Late Bronze Age temple at Tel Mevorakh, were similarly used as containers for offerings (Guz-Zilberstein 1984, pp. 12–15; Stern 1984, fig. II).

⁹³ It is possible that public feasts took place outside the sanctuary, but no archaeological evidence for this is available. Food preparation for public feasts or/and sacrifices was performed in the courtyards around the Tell Qasile sanctuaries (Mazar 1980, p. 42; 1985, p. 51; Zevit 2001, p. 131) and perhaps also outside the Late Bronze Age Fosse Temple I at Lachish (Tufnell, Inge and Harding 1940, p. 44). It is doubtful that food was cooked inside Sanctuary 49 (*cf.* Zevit 2001, p. 311), since, although fragments identified as belonging to a clay oven were retrieved from it (Aharoni 1975, p. 108), no cooking installations were identified *in situ*.

considered separately from the other cooking vessels from the sanctuary, the presence of a miniature cooking pot (Fig. 1: 1, no. 31) is not particularly suggestive of non-domestic locations, since such vessels are found in various types of contexts – domestic, cultic and funerary.⁹⁴ But when the entire assemblage of cooking vessels is examined, it becomes apparent that all five better-preserved cooking pots from the sanctuary are small vessels, and four of them are jugs, while large cooking pots with wide openings, rounded bases and two handles, typical of the Iron Age IIA, are represented only by small sherds, and are most likely residual.⁹⁵ It seems that the reason for this is functional: small cooking pots were convenient for cooking and serving small portions of food, appropriate for food offerings to the sanctuary. Cooking jugs, with their narrow openings and large loop handles, were well-designed for transferring food from one place to another. It is not accidental that the cooking pot from the Iron Age I sanctuary at Ai, found near the raised platform and the incense burner was also jug-shaped.⁹⁶

It should be also noted that the Philistine-style cooking jug from Sanctuary 49 may or may not indicate the ethnic affiliation of its user. Although the Philistine border was located only a few kilometers to the north-west of Lachish, and Philistines no doubt resided in the town, it is impossible to extrapolate the ethnic identity of the user from cultural affiliation of this ceramic vessel without any additional supporting evidence.

Armor Scales

Two armor scales were found in the sanctuary, one made of bronze and the other of iron.⁹⁷ They probably originated from two different corselets, and it can be hypothesized that they were brought to the sanctuary as offerings and placed on one of the benches or on the raised platform. Although some scholars regard their context as secondary,⁹⁸ it seems that there is no sufficient reason to doubt their attribution to the sanctuary; yet, given the nature of these small objects and of their presentation in the report, their residuality cannot be completely ruled out. The reported level of both armor scales is about the same as that of the incense bowl (Fig. 1: 1, no. 21)

⁹⁴ For selected examples see Aharoni 1975, pl. 47:20; Zimhoni 2004, figs. 25.36:13; 25.37:19; 25.54:1.

⁹⁵ Aharoni 1975, pl. 41:16–17; for the better-preserved Iron Age IIA parallels from Arad see Singer-Avitz 2002, figs. 1:10, 13; 8:5–7.

⁹⁶ Marquet-Krause 1949, pl. LXXIV:1071; Zevit 2001, fig. 3.16.

⁹⁷ Aharoni 1975, pl. 37:3, 5; see also Rothenberg 1975, p. 76.

⁹⁸ Zevit 2001, p. 214, fn. 149; Gottlieb 2010, p. 97.

and is only a few centimeters higher than the levels of some of the vessels found on the raised platform and on the north-eastern bench.

In the detailed survey of armor scales found in ritual deposits, Maran described a wide geographical extent (the Aegean, Cyprus and the almost entire Near East) of this phenomenon, and a variety of contexts (cultic, domestic, palatial and funerary) in which it is attested.⁹⁹ In the southern Levantine cultic contexts, the closest parallels to the scales from Lachish are the single armor scales that were apparently used as foundation deposits in the Late Bronze Age temples at Beth-Shean and Tell Deir 'Alla.¹⁰⁰

Keeping in mind the above-mentioned reservations, it can be suggested that the two armor scales were deposited in the sanctuary as votive offerings, dedicated to a deity in order to ensure its protection. According to this interpretation, single armor scales symbolized divine protection and had apotropaic significance.¹⁰¹ Various types of weapons, found in cultic contexts, seem to represent a related phenomenon.¹⁰² If correct, this understanding of the armor scales from Sanctuary 49 adds another aspect to the range of rituals performed there.

Standing Stones and Favissa

The large standing stone, found to the south of the sanctuary, apparently stood in an open area. With the exception of a burnt piece of wood, interpreted by Aharoni as the *ʾāšērā*, no installations or finds related to the *massēbā* were found in the small area excavated.

In the southern Levant, the cult of *massēbôt* was quite widespread during the Bronze and Iron Ages.¹⁰³ The Late Bronze Age examples are coming, *inter alia*, from Gezer, Beth-Shean, Hazor and possibly also from Tell Zerā'a (Gadara).¹⁰⁴ Some of these standing stones, such as those from Gezer and Beth-Shean, were located in open areas, similarly to the large standing stone from Lachish. During the Iron Age, several open cultic places with a standing stone(s) as a central feature are known. The Iron Age I open cult

⁹⁹ Maran 2004, pp. 18–24.

¹⁰⁰ Maran 2004, pp. 21–22.

¹⁰¹ See also Karageorghis and Masson 1975, p. 222.

¹⁰² For example, bronze swords, arrowheads and an axe were found in a hoard of votive objects in the Area B cult place at Hazor Stratum XI (Yadin *et al.* 1961, pl. CCV: 3–7, 10–11), and a bronze axe-adze, which was perhaps used as a carpentry tool, was found on the raised platform of Temple 131 at Tell Qasile Stratum X (Mazar 1985, pp. 3–4).

¹⁰³ Mettinger 1995, with references to excavation reports.

¹⁰⁴ For the possible standing stones from Tell Zerā'a see Vieweger and Häser 2007, p. 6, pl. 2. The standing stones from Gezer were probably in use during the Late Bronze Age, but they were founded perhaps as early as the Early Bronze Age (Ben-Ami 2008).

place recently discovered in Area A at Hazor had a standing stone with three associated flat stone slabs interpreted as offering tables.¹⁰⁵ The “Bull Site”, an early Israelite cult place in the Samaria Hills, is also built around a *massēbâ*. Several flat stone slabs were found in front of the standing stone, most probably functioning as offering tables. A large *massēbâ* stood in the forecourt of the last phase (twelfth century BCE) of the Fortress Temple at Shechem.¹⁰⁶ An open cult place with standing stones was recently excavated at Tel Rehov in Stratum IV, dated to the ninth century BCE.¹⁰⁷ It consisted of a brick platform topped by a smaller stone platform that served as a foundation for three *massēbôt*. In front of the platform was a flat stone slab, used as an offering table. A square fenestrated stand with its top surface burned was found near the platform, together with a large number of animal bones.

Perhaps the best-known example of the Iron Age standing stones was discovered in the late ninth–eighth century BCE Judahite sanctuary at Arad (Strata X–IX), where at least one *massēbâ* stood on the raised platform in the holy of holies.¹⁰⁸ This narrow and elongated limestone pillar, *ca.* 1 m high, had rounded top and bottom, and remains of red paint were found on its surface. Associated installations and finds included a large stone sacrificial altar, two stone incense altars, a ceramic incense burner, and numerous animal bones. During the Iron Age, standing stones inside sanctuaries are also known from Tel Dan, Hazor, Tell Qiri, Tell Qasile, Nahal Patish, Timna', and other sites.¹⁰⁹ Veneration of aniconic divine representations in the form of stones (*baetyls*) is attested in other regions as well, *e.g.* on Cyprus and in the Aegean (including Crete).¹¹⁰

The meaning of standing stones has been discussed in numerous archaeological and literary studies, and the prevailing opinion, with which I concur, is that these are aniconic representations of deities.¹¹¹ It should also be noted that some standing stones, especially when found in groups, may be interpreted as evidence for an ancestral cult, and others may have been

¹⁰⁵ Ben-Ami 2006, pp. 123–125.

¹⁰⁶ Campbell 2002, pp. 181–184.

¹⁰⁷ Mazar 2003: 149–150, ill. 9–10; Edelman 2010, pp. 91–92.

¹⁰⁸ Herzog 2002, pp. 57–66.

¹⁰⁹ In addition to Mettinger 1995 and references there, see Mazar 1980, p. 28 (for Tell Qasile); Ben-Tor and Portugali 1987, pp. 82–91 (for Tell Qiri); Biran 2002, pp. 8–20 (for Tel Dan); Nahshoni 2009a; 2009b (for Nahal Patish). Some of the standing stones at these sites are relatively small and comparable in size and shape to those found by Aharoni in a possible pit at Lachish.

¹¹⁰ Webb 1999, pp. 182–183 (for Cyprus); Younger 1988, pp. 282–283; Warren 1990, pp. 193–206; La Rosa 2001 (for the Aegean).

¹¹¹ For example, Mettinger 1995, p. 37; Zevit 2001, p. 257; Hess 2007, p. 305.

erected as witnesses to covenants and treaties or in order to commemorate important events.¹¹² Since all these functions are closely related to cult, however, in the context of the present study these possibilities may be regarded as complementary rather than contradictory.

As mentioned above, Aharoni found a number of elongated broken stones in a pit that he interpreted as small standing stones (*massēbôt*) that were intentionally destroyed and buried in a cultic repository – a *favissa*. As with most of the other finds discovered to the south of the sanctuary, this interpretation is not certain (see above), but it is plausible enough to be shortly discussed here.

The scant evidence for Iron Age *favissae* comes from Tell Qasile, Yavneh and ‘En Hazeva, and possibly also from Tel Hadid and from the Nahal Patish temple.¹¹³ None of these *favissae* contained *massēbôt*, and none are coming from Judahite sites. The fact that the Lachish *favissa* did not contain other finds except broken standing stones is also remarkable. The significance of these observations, however, is unclear. It is quite possible that features similar to the Lachish *favissa* were overlooked by excavators of other Judahite sites, and the ritual burial of standing stones was in fact more common in Judah (and elsewhere) than what can be learned from publications. Yet, if we are to stick to demonstrable evidence, the practice of ritual discard of cultic objects was unpopular in Judah.

Discussion and Conclusions

As demonstrated above, numerous architectural and artifactual aspects of the Lachish cult place are rooted in the cultural milieu of the southern Levant. On the other hand, the absence of figurines or other images of deities from the sanctuary seems to represent a feature that is unique for Judah. Since Sanctuary 49 and the standing stone found near it represent the earliest Judahite cult place known so far, this conclusion has important bearing on the problem of the origins of the Judahite cult.

Scholars already noted that the “Lachish Reliefs” from Sennacherib’s Southwest palace at Nineveh do not show any statues or other types of cult images among the Assyrian booty taken from Lachish, although the spoils do include ritual objects (incense burners).¹¹⁴ Na’aman cogently argued that

¹¹² For example, Graesser 1972; De Moor 1995.

¹¹³ Nahshoni 2009a, p. 90; 2009b; Kletter 2010, p. 202, with references.

¹¹⁴ E.g. Na’aman 1999, pp. 404–405; for the relevant part of the “Lachish Reliefs” see Ussishkin 1982, pl. 69.

if such images would have existed, they would be shown in the reliefs as symbols of surrender of the god(s) of Lachish to the gods of Assyria. The evidence from Sanctuary 49 seems to support this view, although the archaeological evidence, by its nature, can be interpreted in more than one way, and it cannot be proved that the archaeological picture from Lachish faithfully reflects the nature of the ancient cultic practices. This problem is exemplified by the view of Zevit that in Sanctuary 49 “the single altar ... most likely stood before some symbol or icon or image to which offerings were being made.”¹¹⁵ This view is certainly plausible, but an alternative explanation can be suggested as well, since not even an aniconic *massēbâ*, such as the one found in the “holy-of-holies” of the Arad sanctuary,¹¹⁶ was found in Sanctuary 49. In theory, it is possible to argue that the image worshipped in Sanctuary 49 was made of wood or/and was taken away from the room before the latter was destroyed. Some non-Judahite Iron Age sanctuaries also had no iconic cultic images, e.g. the Iron Age II Moabite sanctuary at Khirbat al-Mudayna, where, similarly to Lachish, the lack of such images may not reflect the original situation.¹¹⁷ However, even if each specific case of (an)iconism in the archaeology of Judahite cult can be questioned, the general picture is, nevertheless, of a remarkable scarcity (or even absence) of iconic images of deities as foci of public worship, in contrast with the neighboring cultures.¹¹⁸ It can be hypothesized that the empty platform in Sanctuary 49 was a humble version of the empty *cherubim* throne in the Jerusalem temple.¹¹⁹ This impression is strengthened by the recent find of two clay figurines of a seated god (perhaps El or Ba'al) in a cultic corner in Gath, a Philistine city close to Lachish, in the late ninth century BCE context that is contemporary or perhaps even somewhat later than Sanctuary 49.¹²⁰ The Lachish sanctuary, therefore, may represent one of the earliest attestations of aniconism in the Judahite cult, and it is likely that Judahite cult(s) were aniconic even before the eighth century BCE (the dating of the Arad temple).¹²¹

¹¹⁵ Zevit 2001, p. 216.

¹¹⁶ Herzog 2002, pp. 63–64.

¹¹⁷ Daviau and Steiner 2000, p. 16. Fragments of three female figurines, perhaps in secondary deposition, were found in the Khirbat al-Mudayna sanctuary (Daviau and Steiner 2000, fig. 11:5–7), but their function is unclear.

¹¹⁸ E.g. Mettinger 1995; Beck 1996; Hendel 1997; Na'aman 1999; for a different view see e.g. Uehlinger 1997; 2003. Neighboring cultures had aniconic traditions as well. See e.g. Ornan 2005 (for Mesopotamia) and Hitchcock 2010 (for the Aegean).

¹¹⁹ Cf. Mettinger 1995.

¹²⁰ Maeir 2008.

¹²¹ The question of political affiliation of Lachish Level V should be considered separately from the cultural/ethnic affiliation of its inhabitants. For the commonly accepted view that

The identity of the deity (or deities) worshipped in Sanctuary 49 is obscure. The historical deduction that the Arad *massēbā* symbolized the presence of YHWH,¹²² if correct, has only an indirect bearing on the identity of the deity worshipped in the Lachish sanctuary. This is because in the southern Levant the veneration of standing stones, of course, was not limited to the cult of YHWH, and, therefore, YHWH was not the only deity whose cult could have been aniconic in the Iron Age IIA Judah. As demonstrated above, various archaeological aspects of cult performed in the Lachish sanctuary are rooted in local Canaanite traditions, and this phenomenon is in agreement with the generally acknowledged overlap between Canaanite and Judahite religions and cults.¹²³ It should be also mentioned that Sanctuary 49 is dated to the period when the Judahite material culture only started to take shape as an entity distinct from the other cultures of the southern Levant. Thus, at least from the archaeological point of view, the interpretation of the Lachish sanctuary as Yahwistic is possible but by no means certain.

The number of the deities worshipped in this sanctuary is another thorny subject. On the one hand, it is perhaps possible to interpret the chalices found near the *bāmā* as being offerings to “an unrepresented deity (or deities[?]),” and the arrangement of cultic objects in the sanctuary as “suggesting that more than one deity, perhaps one major and two minor deities, were worshipped here.”¹²⁴ On the other hand, it seems that the relationship between the number of altars/incense burners in a sanctuary and the number of deities worshipped in it cannot be straightforwardly established. Moreover, in the specific case discussed here contingency of ancient events and of archaeological deposition has to be taken into consideration as well. More than four stands may have been used in the sanctuary, and, as attested by the number of incense bowls, only two stands were in actual use immediately before the sanctuary’s demise. Thus, the suggestion that the four stands were arranged in two sets of two items, one set for each deity, as well as the relationship of the limestone altar to the worship of another, major deity, perhaps need additional support. The additional unanswered question concerns the difference in function between ceramic stands and limestone altars (if there was such a difference, was it necessarily due to the rituals performed for different deities?)

Lachish Level V belonged to the kingdom of Judah see Ussishkin 2004, p. 76; for the view that it was affiliated with the kingdom of Gath see Fantalkin 2008, pp. 32–33.

¹²² E.g. Na’aman 1999, p. 408.

¹²³ Niehr 2010.

¹²⁴ Zevit 2001, pp. 216–217, see also pp. 153–154, 312 there.

Two large cultic objects, most probably metal offering stands/incense burners, appear as the Assyrian booty in the “Lachish Reliefs.”¹²⁵ If these stands were indeed made of bronze (and if their representation reflected a real event), they would be expensive pieces of ritual furniture, the production of which was most probably sponsored by the central authority. Therefore, it seems that they reflect the royal and official aspect of the cult at Lachish. During the 8th century BCE, Lachish was the second most important city in Judah, and it functioned as a royal fortress with a large palace-fort.¹²⁶ The ideological message of the “Lachish Reliefs” was to demonstrate the submission of the kingdom of Judah as exemplified by its royal city, Lachish (since Jerusalem was not conquered),¹²⁷ and the booty taken from it represented various aspects of Judahite statehood.¹²⁸ It is possible that they originated from the city’s shrine, as proposed by Aharoni and Na’aman,¹²⁹ but even if they did not originate from the shrine but from some other ceremonial structure, such as the palace, as argued by Uehlinger and Edelman,¹³⁰ the relief bears a testimony to the importance of these vessels in the state-supported Judahite cult and elite ceremonies, as well as to the fact that Assyrians were well-aware of this.¹³¹

In contrast to these symbols of kingship, the simple and crudely shaped clay stands from Sanctuary 49, with their carelessly cut fenestrations, were much simpler and cheaper products, no doubt manufactured by a local potter on behalf of either a private person (perhaps a priest or a rich Lachishite) or the neighborhood community of worshippers. The important evidence for such non-official cult during the Iron Age II comes from the Khirbat al-Mudayna sanctuary, which yielded a stone incense burner that was apparently donated by a private person, as evidenced by the inscription mentioning the names of the maker and the owner of this object.¹³² The small size of Sanctuary 49 and the relatively humble nature of the artifacts found in it indicate its low social status and the popular nature

¹²⁵ Ussishkin 1982, pl. 69.

¹²⁶ Ussishkin 2004, p. 84.

¹²⁷ See Zukerman and Shai 2006, pp. 755–756, with references.

¹²⁸ Edelman 2008, p. 405.

¹²⁹ Aharoni 1975, p. 42; Na’aman 1999, pp. 404–405.

¹³⁰ Uehlinger 2003, pp. 285–286; Edelman 2008, p. 405.

¹³¹ This depiction is paralleled by the description in the “Letter to the god” of the booty taken by Sargon II in his 714 BCE campaign against Urartu and its allies. Among the various other ritual objects taken to Assyria from the temple of Musasir, this document mentions silver censers/candelabra (Luckenbill 1927, p. 95), and one of such objects seems to be depicted, also as an Assyrian booty, in a relief from Khorsabad describing that event (Botta and Flandin 1849, pl. 141).

¹³² Dion and Daviau 2000.

of the rituals conducted in it. It is possible that several such neighborhood sanctuaries existed in Iron Age IIA Lachish. Therefore, it seems that even if some elements in this cultic compound (such as a large standing stone) continued to be in use in Level III, the cultic stands shown on the “Lachish Reliefs” originate from elsewhere.¹³³ It should be additionally mentioned that the cancellation of Sanctuary 49 had nothing to do with Hezekiah’s cultic reforms (if these ever took place),¹³⁴ since, as argued above, the sanctuary’s demise occurred about a century earlier (*ca.* 800 BCE at the latest).¹³⁵

The limited floor space of the sanctuary did not permit more than two or three people to be in it simultaneously. It seems that the entire north-western half of the sanctuary, found empty of finds, was reserved for worshippers and/or priests. It can be suggested that the sanctuary was a chapel where incense and food were offered, and, perhaps, individual prayers were conducted, but public rituals were conducted outside it, perhaps in relation to the large *massēbâ* found to the south-east of the sanctuary. Indeed, the presence of two concentrations of cultic remains in the same area (the sanctuary and the large *massēbâ*) strongly suggests that both were parts of a larger cultic compound, as tentatively proposed by Zevit.¹³⁶ It should be also noted that although Aharoni’s soundings in and around the Level I “Solar Shrine” were limited in size, it is clear that Sanctuary 49 was not a part of a larger residential structure,¹³⁷ and, therefore, does not represent a domestic cult place.¹³⁸

The destruction of Sanctuary 49 was either a result of a conquest of the place by an enemy, or, alternatively, of a cultic reform that led to the abolishment of this cult place. Due to the ambiguity of the archaeological evidence concerning the manner in which the sanctuary was cancelled (above), both options are hypothetical. The fact that the sanctuary was never rebuilt and its cultic objects were never retrieved by the local inhabitants perhaps hints that the sanctuary was abolished by people who came from the settlement itself or from elsewhere in Judah, rather than by the enemy (*e.g.* by the Philistines or the Egyptians). Tentative as it is, some kind of cultic reform seems to be the best explanation for the end of the sanctuary. If this assumption is correct, the burial of a small non-elite cult

¹³³ For a different view see Halpern 1996, p. 317 fn. 65.

¹³⁴ Cf. Edelman 2008.

¹³⁵ See also Edelman 2008, p. 423; for a different view see Finkelstein and Silberman 2006, pp. 272–273.

¹³⁶ Zevit 2001, p. 214.

¹³⁷ Aharoni 1975, pl. 60.

¹³⁸ For a different view see Kitchen 2003, p. 410.

place and of its ritual equipment would be one of the earliest cases of intentional cancellation of cultic places in the Iron Age Judah. Among the cancelled cultic places and installations during this period three examples can be mentioned: the standing stone incorporated into a wall in Khirbet Qeiyafa (dated to the Iron Age I/II transition),¹³⁹ the dismantled horned altar from Beer-Sheba, and the abolished temple at Arad (both dated to the Iron Age IIB).¹⁴⁰ The burial of several small standing stones in a pit near Aharoni's "High Place," if correctly interpreted, can be broadly dated to the entire Iron Age IIA–IIB range. However, it should be stressed again that on this stage of research any relationship between the finds from Lachish and the religious reforms or cancellations of cultic places in Judah as known from the Bible cannot be convincingly demonstrated.

To conclude, I agree with Uehlinger that "a century of archaeology in Palestine produced no more cult structures from the heartland of Judah than the Lachish room 49, the Jerusalem tumuli, Cave 1 and the Arad sanctuary, *i.e.* a rather insecure basis on which to reconstruct Judahite cultic practices."¹⁴¹ This study is an attempt to extract maximum useful information from the publication of the earliest Judahite sanctuary known so far, and the only Judahite sanctuary that contained *in situ* portable artifacts. Clearly, the reconstruction of Judahite cultic practices is only in its initial stages.

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¹³⁹ Garfinkel 2009.

¹⁴⁰ Aharoni 1974; Herzog 2002, pp. 49–72. The reasons for the cancellation of the Arad sanctuary are admittedly less clear. See Edelman 2008, pp. 406–418, with further references. For the tradition of ritual burial of temples in the ancient Near East see Bjorkman 1999.

¹⁴¹ Uehlinger 1997, p. 138; for the different views concerning the (non-)cultic nature of the finds from Jerusalem Cave 1 see Zevit 2001, pp. 206–210; Hess 2007, pp. 297–298, fn. 1; Kletter 2010, p. 202, all with further references.

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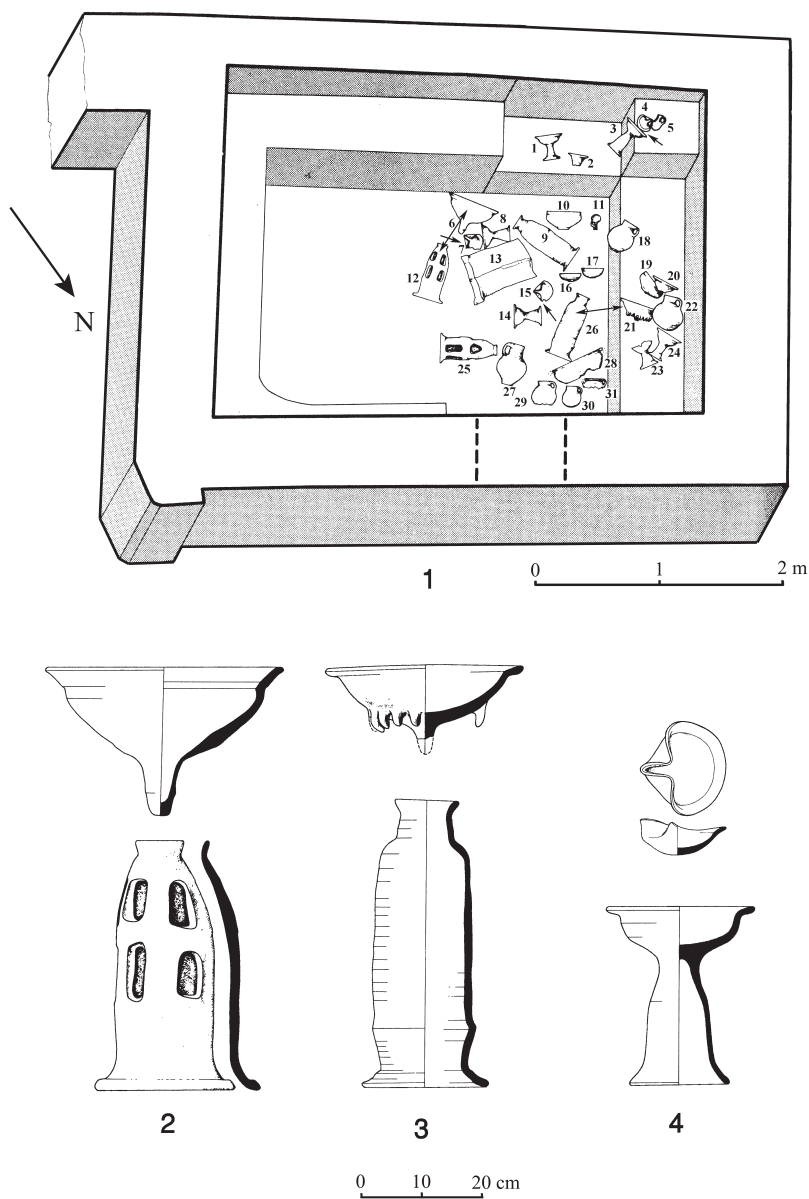


Fig. 1. Sanctuary 49 and finds from it.

- 1: Sanctuary 49 (after Aharoni 1975, fig. 6);
- 2: Stand and incense bowl (after Aharoni 1975, fig. 43:2, 5);
- 3: Stand and incense bowl (after Aharoni 1975, fig. 43:1, 6);
- 4: Chalice and lamp (after Aharoni 1975, fig. 42:12, 20).



Fig. 2. Sanctuary 49, view to north-west (from Yeivin 1973, pl. 32:2, courtesy of the Israel Exploration Society).

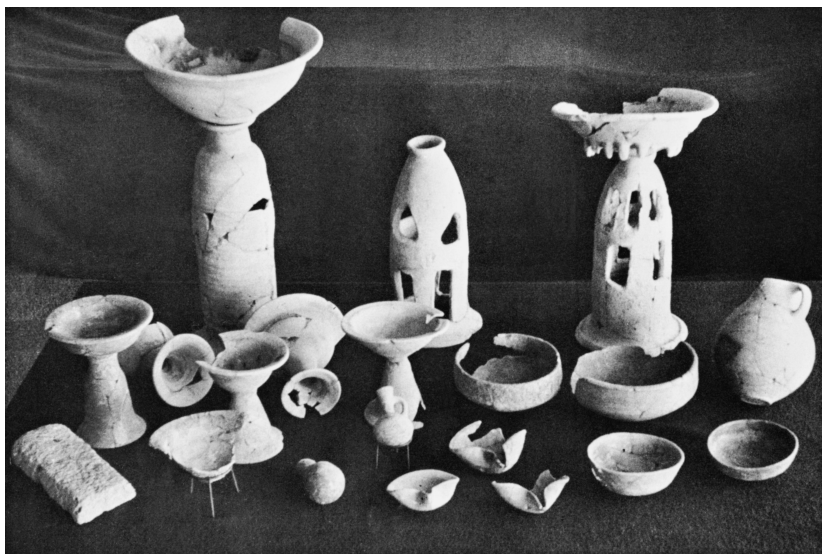


Fig. 3. Objects from Sanctuary 49 (from Yeivin 1973, pl. 33:1, courtesy of the Israel Exploration Society).

Power and Presence: Landscape and Tenure in Middle Bronze Age Central Transcaucasia

Jessie BIRKETT-REES

Classics and Archaeology
School of Historical and Philosophical Studies
The University of Melbourne
Victoria 3010
AUSTRALIA
E-mail: jessiebr@unimelb.edu.au

School of Historical and
European Studies (Archaeology)
La Trobe University
Melbourne, Victoria 3086
AUSTRALIA
E-mail: j.birkett-rees@latrobe.edu.au

Abstract

This paper addresses the archaeological record of the Middle Bronze Age in central Transcaucasia, around Tbilisi, within the context of physical and social landscapes. Archival research and field survey have brought together the archaeological record of the Tbilisi region, resulting in a comprehensive digital database of all recorded archaeological features in the area. This paper examines the Middle Bronze Age features in the landscape and investigates how concepts of tenure may be active in the nature and location of these features.

Introduction

The natural landscapes of the Caucasus are legendary, at once imposing and inviting to human inhabitants. The commanding mountain range features in local mythologies and permeated the mythic cycles of distant civilisations, famously bound with the Titan of Greek legend, Prometheus.¹ In local variations, a Promethean figure named Abrskil or Amiran is the

¹ The Caucasus is a recurring locus in Greek mythology, including parts of the Argonautica and of Zeus' pursuit of Thetis in the Achilleus cycle. Tuite has also drawn parallels between the Greek goddess Thetis and her warrior son Achilleus and the Caucasian goddess Dael and her heroic son, Amiran: Tuite 1997. Also, see Charachidze 1986, for a detailed comparison of Greek Prometheus and Svanetian Amiran.

benefactor of humankind, ridding the fields of choking undergrowth so they can be tilled.² The surviving mythologies surrounding the Caucasus, ‘father of the rivers of the East’,³ speak to the significant relationships between people and the environment in historic periods. Yet the archaeological landscapes of Transcaucasia, created by the human use and re-use of the region over millennia, have received little attention.⁴ The following research addresses the Mtkvari (Kura) River valley in central Transcaucasia in which the modern capital of the Republic of Georgia, Tbilisi, continues to develop and expand (Fig. 1). In the current environment of rapid urbanisation it is timely to consider the palimpsest of the present day landscape and the ways in which the previous tenants of the Mtkvari valley conveyed their presence in this region.⁵

Often described as a crossroads between Asia and Europe, the physical geography of the Southern Caucasus (Transcaucasia) offers limited passages through the mountains, river valleys and high plateaus and provides local inhabitants with natural strongholds and rich resources. The central Transcaucasian landscape of the Kura valley has been populated by Neolithic and Chalcolithic communities, the Early Bronze Age Kura-Araxes peoples, the Middle Bronze Age early kurgan cultures of Martkopi and Bedeni and the second millennium Trialeti culture.⁶ The Late Bronze-Early Iron Ages saw competing polities establish in the valleys of the region, including the Samtavro culture and the Lchashen-Tsitelgori culture, whose communities both settled the Tbilisi region.⁷ During the late first millennium BCE and early common era, the imperial rivalries of Rome, Persia and Byzantium were played out across Transcaucasian territory. At this time Transcaucasia was also the location of significant local powers, including the Colchian and Iberian kingdoms in what is now modern Georgia.⁸ The wealth and diversity of the Transcaucasian landscape combined with this long and dynamic human history has resulted in a rich record for archaeological investigation.

² Abrskil features in the Abkhaz tradition, Amiran in Svanetian legends. Lang 1966, p. 71; Lang and Meredith-Owens 1959, p. 469.

³ Kingsley 1980, p. 170.

⁴ Notable exceptions are the publications of the ArAGATS team, working in Armenia, including A. T. Smith et al. 2009, and the Deutsches Archäologisches Institut, DAI 2011.

⁵ Palimpsest: the successive superposition of one landscape on another, sometimes associated with the removal of earlier landscapes by later landscapes: Crawford 1953, p. 51; Hicks 2007; Maitland 1988 [1897], p. 15; Roberts 1987, p. 80; Wilkinson 2003, p. 7.

⁶ For cultural surveys of these periods see Akhvlediani 2005; Dzgharidze 1994; Kiguradze 1982; Kohl 2007; Munchaev 1982; 1994;

⁷ Lordkipanidze 1991: 7–92.

⁸ Lordkipanidze 1991: 93–176

The Caucasus has strong academic traditions informed by its European and Soviet twentieth century history and, in the current environment of renewed international collaboration, is positioned at a crossroads between differing schools of archaeological theory and method. The work of archaeologists in Transcaucasia is gradually reaching a broader international audience and progressive ventures are resulting from interaction between different schools of research.⁹ The present study draws on developments in landscape archaeology and geographic information science to investigate the relationships established between people and landscape. Whilst 'landscape' has become an increasingly popular term in Anglo-American archaeology in recent decades, the archaeological record of central Transcaucasia is yet to be examined in this context. Substantial archaeological sites and assemblages in central Transcaucasia have received attention but studies addressing these sites in relation to each other are rare.¹⁰ Examining the assemblage of archaeological finds *en masse* in the context of the regional landscape allows us to look for interrelationships between sites and to consider the various ways in which people interacted with the landscapes of the Kura valley.

This paper begins with a discussion of the theories of landscape and place in the social sciences and their relationship to investigations of territoriality or tenure in the prehistoric record. Following an introduction to the Middle Bronze Age of central Transcaucasia, I address the record of the Kura River valley at Tbilisi. This archaeological landscape is dominated by prominent burial mounds, clustered in the Digomi Plain. These constructions are investigated with regard to their form and location, in relation to each other and in the context of other local landscape features. The Digomi Plain is identified as a demarcated place within the valley, in which tangible social engagement sheds some light on the relationships established between people and landscape. Of the many meanings built into the burial mounds, I examine their role in projecting and prolonging group tenure in the local and regional landscape.

⁹ Amongst these projects are Project ArAGATS in Armenia (The Institute of Archaeology and Ethnography, Armenian National Academy of Sciences and the University of Chicago); the Georgian-Australian Investigations in Archaeology (GAIA) project (National Museum of Georgia and The University of Melbourne); excavations of Tachti Perda and Aruchlo in eastern Georgia by the National Museum of Georgia and the Eurasia Department of the German Archaeological Institute, Berlin; the Udabno Project conducted by Eberhard Karls Universität Tübingen and the Middle East Technical University (ODTÜ) Ankara in cooperation with Georgian archaeologists. See Sagona 2010 for a list of current excavations in the Trans-Caucasus.

¹⁰ R. Abramishvili 1978; Burney and Lang 1971; Kuftin 1946; Kushnareva 1997; A. T. Smith 1999.

Locating landscapes

This investigation of the use of space over time in the Tbilisi region draws on recent research in which the archival records of archaeological research in Greater Tbilisi were integrated with new field survey data to form a comprehensive Geographic Information System (GIS) for the region.¹¹ The integration of existing archaeological legacy data with modern GPS field survey methods, digital mapping and analyses offers a new perspective on the archaeological record of central Transcaucasia and underscores the value of landscape as an analytical paradigm.¹² One of the principal goals of this broader research project is the collation of information on archaeological features in Greater Tbilisi. The integration of legacy data with fresh survey results, including GPS locations for existing and newly located archaeological features, presents the only appropriate assemblage of records for the investigation of the regional use of the landscape. The middle Kura valley at Tbilisi has been addressed by archaeologists for over a century, predominantly in single-site excavations and investigations initiated due to urban development.¹³ The legacy data resulting from these investigations is drawn on in the 1978 publication '*Tbilisi I*' but, since then, has substantially increased with modern urban expansion.

Over this same period, archaeologists have become increasingly interested in the significance of space, of place and of landscape, both as methodological models and as conceptual loci for theory and interpretation.¹⁴ This interest builds on concurrent theory and research in other social sciences, including anthropology, geography, history and philosophy, signifying a broad reassessment of our approaches to the spatial dimensions of culture. Landscape is both an expression of cultural systems and an active

¹¹ See also: Birkett-Rees 2010.

¹² *Legacy data* is a term sometimes used in the context of digital data, referring to the data contained in a system prior to the installation of a new system. In the context of this research, *legacy data* is reinterpreted as an expedient collective term for existing data resulting from preceding research projects, including technical drawings, field reports, material collections, and personal communications with the field researchers who produced the original data.

¹³ Examples of such include: R. Abramishvili 1978, p. 20: expedition instigated owing to urban development in Saburtalo (at Delisi) and in Digomi; also at Narekvavi: Apakidze 1999, p. 5; Nikolaishvili and Gavasheli 2007: investigations resumed owing to changing of the Baku-Supsa oil pipes during which ten tombs were destroyed. Earthworks in the Digomi Plain resulted in the discovery of and damage to Treligorebi, R. Abramishvili 1978, p. 20; the construction of a hydroelectrical power station precipitated rapid excavation of the Tsalka region (Trialeti), Kuftin 1946, p. 340. For reports on archaeological investigations emanating from the Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan pipeline, see Gamkrelidze 2010.

¹⁴ Ashmore 2004; Bender 1993; Mitchell 2002; Rossignol and Wandsnider 1992; A. T. Smith 2001; Wilkinson 2003.

instrument in shaping and renegotiating those regimes. This paper proceeds from the premise that the landscape itself is an ongoing medium of exchange, a medium for material expression of social concepts, such as identity and authority, in archaeologically recoverable forms.

The framework of landscape in archaeological research has been described as ‘usefully ambiguous’, encompassing both the physical and the conceptual.¹⁵ Within this flexible framework, theory shapes archaeologists’ engagement with diverse themes in the record, from memory to identity to ecology to palimpsest. Landscape archaeology does not have a single unified body of theory,¹⁶ and instead takes in a wide variety of perspectives united by their interest in the concept of place. Likewise, there is no unifying theory of ‘place’, although many dialogues and research agendas address place and the significance of the spatial aspect of social expression.¹⁷

In this instance, I investigate themes of power and identity through the media of distinctive landscape modification. Physical features of mountains, rivers and the built environment are examined together with the cultural landscape of human use, concentrating on places that demonstrate material investment in the Tbilisi valley. Although landscape can be invested with social significance without any material element, places that exhibit material remains will necessarily be the focus of this discussion.¹⁸ Constructed cultural space defines where certain behaviours occur and therefore the built environment assists in articulating societal order and meaning.¹⁹ Cultural frameworks of authority and collective identity are united with the landscape via the concept of ‘territory’ and its physical articulation. Distinctive features or structures also contribute to the development and experience of ‘place’. As van Dyke and Alcock observe, “a sense of place rests upon, and reconstructs, a history of social engagement with the landscape”.²⁰ This history of social engagement importantly acknowledges the dynamic element of ‘place’, in that features are created or recreated and events occur within places over time. Thus place is inti-

¹⁵ Gosden and Head 1994.

¹⁶ As many researchers have noted, including Kowalewski 2008, pp.251–252; A. T. Smith 2001; Thompson et al. 2011, p. 197; McGlade 1999.

¹⁷ On the conceptual relationships between place and space, see de Certeau 1998, who divides place from space on the basis of binary oppositions. Lefebvre 1971, on perceived, conceived and representational space, also Malpas 1999 on the ‘topographic’ relationship of places, Soja 1989 on the social production of ‘spatiality’, Rapoport 1994 and Tuan 1977.

¹⁸ As Philip Kohl has noted, “archaeologists should reconstruct the past on the basis of the evidence they best control”: Kohl 2007, p. 9. In prehistoric periods this is material evidence.

¹⁹ Parker Pearson and Richards 1994, p. 40; R. D. Sack 1993, p. 326.

²⁰ van Dyke and Alcock 2003, p. 5.

mately connected with the temporal as well as with spatial and social engagement.

The landscape is an artefact in its own right and archaeological method provides a means to examine continuity and change over time and to investigate chronologically specific land uses.²¹ Identifying different archaeological periods and different cultural groups within the record relies on stylistic differentiation of material remains. There is always more than one way of manufacturing, using or doing things and people choose amongst these equivalent ways based largely on their cultural traditions.²² The use and 'making' of a landscape is a facet of the production of material culture and the modification of the landscape to create culturally distinctive features is a powerful means of signifying group identity.²³ In marking out the landscape these cultural features can express territoriality or tenure and participate in the complex negotiation of social space.

The terms territoriality and tenure require further explanation as both are spatial components of social authority. Ingold makes a key distinction between the two, stating that territoriality is a mode of communication whilst tenure is a means of appropriation.²⁴ Whilst I argue that statements of tenure also communicate ideas about social identity and order, Ingold's discussion of the temporal component of tenure is important. The distinction here is that tenure denotes continuity and the capacity to convey and prolong the presence of a person or group, whilst territoriality signifies "a succession of synchronic states" or isolated events of communicative behaviour which lack projection of past into future.²⁵ Just as social engagement is integral to the creation of place, the expression of tenure relies upon dynamic social relationships established within and between groups and the landscape. Rather than signifying the relationship between tenant and sovereign lord, from which the term tenure derives, here it is used to describe the relationship between the community and the land that they assert their presence in.

The Middle Bronze Age kurgan burial mounds in the Caucasus serve multiple purposes, as elite burials, locations of enduring social and material investment, of ceremonial behaviour and as symbols of group identity. It has been proposed that these burials could serve as territorial markers.²⁶

²¹ Fairclough 1999.

²² Bourdieu 1977; Dietler and Herbich 1998, p. 240; Earle 1990; Hegmon 1998, p. 267; Sackett 1982.

²³ R. D. Sack 1986.

²⁴ Ingold 1986.

²⁵ Ingold 1986, pp. 136–138, quotation p. 136.

²⁶ Sagona 1998, p. 498; Connor and Sagona 2007, p. 35. See also Anthony et al. 1986 and Beck 1995, p. 2, for discussions of territoriality in relation to mortuary mounds.

The ideological phenomenon of 'territory' has played a significant role in the development of archaeological cartography and GIS analyses, as well as in the functioning of ancient societies.²⁷ Here I examine the spatial relations of the burial mounds in the Tbilisi region with respect to their landscape context, and discuss how their form and location could articulate tenure within the social context of the semi-mobile Middle Bronze Age communities. A nearest-neighbour method is used as a starting point for discussions of landscape use and spatial management in the Tbilisi region. This is one perspective from which to approach the behaviour of burial mound construction, using the individual burial and the mortuary site as two units of analysis. Analysis of the burial mounds in relation to each other reveals a clustered distribution, with this clustered mortuary site situated in the valley zone (below 600m asl) in the broad Digomi Plain.

Caucasian contexts

Middle Bronze Age Early Kurgan Culture and Trialeti Culture

The archaeological record of Middle Bronze Age Tbilisi is contextualised by regional developments of the period. Central Transcaucasia of the Middle Bronze Age was occupied by the early kurgan cultures of Martkopi and Bedeni/Alazani, which emerged between 2500 and 2300 BCE, and the subsequent Trialeti culture, which developed around the turn of the second millennium and existed until c.1500 BCE.²⁸ The people of the Middle Bronze Age inhabit a landscape previously occupied by the Early Bronze Age Kura-Araxes culture.²⁹ The transition from the Early Bronze Age to the more regionalised cultures of the Middle Bronze Age is not clearly defined, although the principal cultures of the Middle Bronze Age have received extensive attention. The Middle Bronze Age record of Transcaucasia indicates small groups of people with lifestyles and traditions that vary only slightly. Five general Middle Bronze Age complexes have been identified within the area previously occupied by the Kura-Araxes communities: the Martkopi-Bedeni/Alazani (or Early Kurgan culture),

²⁷ Black 1997; Bord 1995; Crampton 2001; Harley 1988; Harley 1989; Perkins 2003; Rubin 1992; M. L. Smith 2005b; Wood 1992.

²⁸ Edens 1995; Gobejishvili 1980; Gogadze 1972; Kavtaradze 1981; Kuftin 1941; Puturidze 2003; Rubinson 1977; A. T. Smith et al. 2009, p. 34. This chronology has received a lot of attention and will be addressed in coming paragraphs.

²⁹ c.3300–2300 BCE in Transcaucasia. There is a considerable body of literature on the Kura-Araxes culture complex. For recent discussions see: Kiguradze and Sagona 2003; Palumbi 2003; Sagona 2004; A. T. Smith and Rubinson 2003.

the Trialeti (or Trialeti-Vanadzor), Karmirberd (or Tazakend), Sevan-Uzerlik, and Kizylvank (Karmir-Vank, or Van-Urmia). These 'kindred cultures' are similar in their traditions and cultural contacts, united by their burial practices, painted ceramic styles, black polished ceramics with incised or punctate decoration and their expertise in metallurgy.³⁰ Although these communities are evidently related, the exact nature of their relations is only roughly drawn. Following the early kurgan cultures of Martkopi and Bedeni, the Trialeti culture is identified with the central Transcaucasian region.

The chronologies of the Middle Bronze Age in Transcaucasia have challenged scholars for decades, based as they are on an archaeological record biased towards mortuary contexts and frustrated by a limited number of calibrated radiocarbon dates. The lack of a secure suite of radiocarbon dates from Martkopi, Bedeni and Trialeti contexts means that the chronology of the Middle Bronze Age remains relative.³¹ The date for the transition from the Early Bronze Age ultimately rests on only two stratified sequences, those of Shengavit and Tsikhiagora.³² These sites reveal contemporaneous Kura-Araxes, Martkopi and Bedeni traditions between 2500 and 2100 BCE. However, the conventional date of around 2500 BCE for the establishment of Martkopi and Bedeni traditions and 2100 BCE for the closing stage of the Early Bronze Age Kura-Araxes culture in Transcaucasia must be treated with caution due to the small sample number and the large statistical errors of radiocarbon dates from this period.³³

Comparable issues also prevent any precise understanding of the timing of shifts *within* the Transcaucasian Middle Bronze Age. The exceptional culture of the Trialeti communities, localised in the south-eastern reaches of Georgia and named for the magnificent burials located on the Tsalka/Trialeti Plateau near Tbilisi, has received detailed attention from B. A. Kuftin, E. M. Gogadze, G. L. Kavtaradze and K. S. Rubinson, amongst others.³⁴ The florescence of the Trialeti culture marks the second chapter of the Middle Bronze Age in Transcaucasia and is divided into three phases, existing from the last centuries of the third millennium to the middle of the

³⁰ Gogadze 1972; Kushnareva 1997, quotation p. 84, 116; Martiriosan 1964; Özfirat 2002; Puturidze 2003, p. 111; Rubinson 2007, p. 136; A. T. Smith 2005a, p. 262; A. T. Smith et al. 2009, p. 38–39.

³¹ For a recent list of the available C¹⁴ dates for the Caucasus see Kohl 2007: 61–67 (specifically entries 49 and 50 and figure on p. 265 for Middle Bronze Age Transcaucasia).

³² Makharadze 1994 on Tsikhiagora; Sagona 2004, p. 478; Sardarian 1967 on Shengavit.

³³ Edens 1995, p. 57; Sagona 2004, p. 478–9; Kushnareva 1997, p. 82.

³⁴ Kavtaradze 1981; Kavtaradze 2004; Kuftin 1941; Kuftin 1946; Gogadze 1972; Rubinson 1977.

second millennium.³⁵ The kurgans at Trialeti provide one of the principal sequences anchoring the Middle Bronze chronology and the vigorous argument over the grouping of these kurgans illustrates the broader debate over any precise periodisation.³⁶ The late Trialeti kurgans are generally dated to the 16–15th centuries, marking the final stage of the Middle Bronze Age and potentially overlapping with a ‘transitional’ period to the Late Bronze Age. This transitional period, in which features of the later Middle Bronze Age are found together with Late Bronze Age material, is noted at the sites of Sajoge and Namgalamitsa in the Digomi Plain in Tbilisi and is evident on the Tsalka plateau.³⁷

The settlement and subsistence strategies of the Middle Bronze people diverge from those of the Early Bronze Age communities, commencing with a regional shift away from the Early Bronze Age villages and agriculture in the valleys and low plains together with the introduction of an elaborate mode of burial that contrasts with the simple inhumations of the Kura Araxes.³⁸ The distinctive barrow burials of the Middle Bronze Age Martkopi, Bedeni and Trialeti societies each involve substantial labour in their construction, including burial cists or wooden chambers covered by layered earth and stone, and often include rich grave goods. The investment of resources in this burial tradition, together with its exclusivity, points to established symbolic practices and social behaviour regulated by a stratified social system.

Delineation of the social structure of the Middle Bronze Age people is complicated by the lack of stratified settlements within the central Transcaucasian archaeological record. In southern Transcaucasia, fortified settle-

³⁵ Kuftin 1941; Kushnareva 1997, p. 83; Puturidze 2003, fig 5.2.

³⁶ Summarised in Edens 1995, p. 57; Kavtaradze 1983; Kushnareva 1997, p. 82; Rubinson 1977; Zhordzhikashvili and Gogadze 1974.

³⁷ M. Abramishvili and Orthmann 2008; Bedianashvili 2007; Kavtaradze 2004, p. 549; Kvavadze and Narimanishvili 2011; Pitskhelauri 1973; Narimanishvili 2011.

³⁸ Sagona 2004; Sagona 1993. Although the lifestyle and landscape usage of the kurgan cultures differ from the Kura-Araxes, certain shared regional influences are evident in some burials dating to the mid-third millennium in the Transcaucasian-Anatolian region. Cromlech style burials exhibiting increasing complexity in burial construction point to northern Caucasian influences melding with the late phase Kura-Araxes customs in central Transcaucasia. At the cemetery of Treli in Tbilisi, burials from the earliest phase of the Kura-Araxes culture (second half of the fourth millennium BCE) are simple earthen graves. From the second half of the third millennium BCE, graves are stone lined and encircled with stones in cromlech style. By the latest phase of the Kura-Araxes culture, we have an instance of a deep pit grave, covered by an earthen mound, in a style resembling the early kurgan culture burials, emerging around 2500–2300 BCE in the Tbilisi region. This suggests a transition of traditions during a period of co-habitation or mutual use of the region in the second half of the third millennium BCE. See also, Kiguradze and Sagona 2003; Kushnareva 1997; Miron and Orthmann 1995, p. 199.

ments such as Uzerlik Tepe on the Mil steppe and Lori-berd in the foothills of the Armenian highlands, Kül Tepe, Metsamor and the Garni fortress have yielded Middle Bronze Age Sevan-Uzerlik and Kizylvank ceramics,³⁹ deemed to be contemporary with the Trialeti (Fig. 2).⁴⁰ Surveys of central Transcaucasia have not located similar fortified settlements and had until recently failed to locate any settlements corresponding to the elaborate Middle Bronze Age burial complexes.⁴¹ Trace evidence of these settlements consists of insubstantial, yet significant, Middle Bronze strata located at Berikledzebi, Tqisbolo Gora and Didi Gora in eastern Georgia, which yielded Bedeni ceramics, and Trialeti painted pottery fragments and Martkopi-like sherds respectively.⁴² The Bedeni settlement at Berikledzebi (Period III), distinguished by an ashy layer no more than one metre deep, comprised almost 230 pits, a sections of a perimeter wall and remains of 14 dwellings.⁴³ These finds are offered as evidence for settlement, though the degree of intensity has yet to be determined. Excavators at the site of Sajoge on the Digomi Plain, Tbilisi, have recently discovered Middle Bronze Age sherds in a Late Bronze Age settlement context, resulting from Late Bronze Age pit houses being dug into existing Middle Bronze Age deposits.⁴⁴ The Digomi Plain is the principal site of Middle Bronze Age burials in the Tbilisi valley and the finds at Sajoge offer a faint trace of the people who must have been present to construct these burial mounds.

Further cases of Middle Bronze Age settlement have only very recently been identified, during cultural heritage survey and excavation linked to the Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan and South Caucasian oil pipeline corridors. A settlement consisting of two construction layers was excavated near the village of Jinisi, on the Tsalka plain, a region of continuing use and the site of some of the most elaborate kurgan burials (Fig. 2). The lower settlement comprises four semi-subterranean houses, with single row stone walls and floors levelled with clay, each containing an oven and a hearth.⁴⁵ Stone bases for wooden columns were located in front of the walls and in the centre of the houses. The excavators have connected this construction technique with

³⁹ A. T. Smith 2005a, p. 262; Kushnareva 1997, p. 136, 145.

⁴⁰ Kushnareva 1997, p. 84, 116; Özfırat 2002; Puturidze 2003, p. 111; Rubinson 2007; A. T. Smith 2005a, p. 262.

⁴¹ Gogadze 1972; Puturidze 2003, p. 122.

⁴² Kastl 2008, p. 190; Kohl 2007, p. 114; Mansfeld 1996, p. 365–80; Miron and Orthmann 1995, p. 224.

⁴³ Personal communication A. Sagona. See also Dzhvakhishvili 1998.

⁴⁴ M. Abramishvili and Orthmann 2008, p. 278.

⁴⁵ Amiranishvili and Narimanishvili 2005b; Kvavadze and Narimanishvili 2011, p. 589.

that of the kurgan burial chambers of the Trialeti culture.⁴⁶ The lower settlement level at Jinisi has been dated to the 17–16th centuries BCE, on the basis of ceramic finds which connect the site with Trialeti traditions.⁴⁷ Fine, black burnished ceramics ornamented with imprinted triangles were found on the floors of the lower settlement layers of Jinisi. This style of pottery is a typical product of the Middle Bronze Age in central Transcaucasia and has been located at numerous sites from the period.⁴⁸ Similar ceramics were found at Sajoge in Tbilisi,⁴⁹ connecting this region with the broader terrain of the Middle Bronze Age Trialeti communities.

The finds from Sajoge and Jinisi settlements are changing the way we think of the later Middle Bronze Age communities of central Transcaucasia. Evidence still points to semi-mobile lifestyles, particularly in central Transcaucasia, but the inference that people lived wholly mobile lifestyles is being credibly challenged. Mobility is a high-risk economic subsistence practice that can only be definitively demonstrated through extensive analysis of faunal remains, of which we have very few. While these recent finds are significant, Middle Bronze Age settlements in central Transcaucasia remain rare and fugitive; the majority of archaeological inferences on the lifestyle of Middle Bronze Age communities must be drawn from funerary contexts, for which we have far greater evidence.

These funerary contexts include early kurgans, located on the plain at Tbilisi, Martkopi, Samgori and the Alazani valley and sited on the high plateaus of Tetri-Tskaro (Bedeni) and Tsalka (Trialeti). Kurgans of the later Trialeti periods are constructed within the same region during the first centuries of the second millennium. Internal construction of the elaborate barrows varies, from very large log burial chambers at Bedeni and Martkopi to subterranean shafts covered with wooden planks at Trialeti.⁵⁰ Some early

⁴⁶ Parallels in construction can also be drawn with the Late Bronze Age Building 4 at Sajoge. This structure is attributed to the Lchashen-Tsitelgori culture who are thought to have their roots in the Middle Bronze Age Trialeti traditions: M. Abramishvili and Orthmann 2008, p. 277.

⁴⁷ Amiranishvili and Narimanishvili 2005a; Narimanishvili 2011, p. 330.

⁴⁸ Trialeti kurgans I and II, Zurtaketi kurgans No.3 and No.4, Kvasatali burial No.6, Natakhtari cemeteries II and III and Tsitsamuri burial No.13, dated to the Middle Bronze Age: Narimanishvili 2011, p. 330.

⁴⁹ Trialeti Kurgans I and II (Gogadze 1972, pl. XV: 20,21, 25; pl.XVI:13), Zurtaketi Kurgans No's 3 (Dzhaparidze 1969, pl. XV) and 4 (pl. XXI, fig. 37), Kvasatali Burial No. 6 (Dzhaparidze 1969, fig. 64: 1, 2), Natakhtari cemeteries II and III (Sadradze 2002, pl. XX: 10; pl. XVI: 5; pl. XXVI: 38, 48), and Tsitsamuri Burial No. 13 (Nikolaishvili and Narimanishvili 1995, pp. 59, 69–73, fig. 358, 362–365, 529–575).

⁴⁹ M. Abramishvili and Orthmann 2008: 277.

⁵⁰ Pit structures were found at Trialeti burials IV, X, XIX and XXIV, also in the Namgalamitsa barrows in Tbilisi; Bedeni barrow 5 and barrow 10 contained subterranean log cham-

kurgans at Stepanakert, Sachkhere and Tkviani contained the remains of several people,⁵¹ but the mounds are typically reserved for individual burials, in which the body is cremated or placed on a wooden couch. The external structure of the burial consists of a substantial earthen mound, often comprising layers of earth, stone and wood and sometimes reinforced with a stone casing.⁵² The deceased is frequently interred with rich objects, including fine ceramic wares, woodwork, metal vessels and decorative items of jewellery and weaponry. Barrow burials of earthen mounds and less elaborate internal structures (simplified but by no means modest) are also found in the vicinity of kurgans and in barrow fields in the Digomi Plain in the Tbilisi valley.

The contents of most kurgan burials include ceramics, metal, woodwork, and some faunal remains all of which shed light on the lifestyle and resource range of the kurgan builders. The inclusion of small livestock in the burial assemblages indicates that sheep, goats and cattle formed part of the Middle Bronze Age economy. In the Tbilisi region small livestock remains are included in the burial assemblages at Nakulbakebi, Treli, Namgalamitsa and Sajoge, whilst the bones of large horned cattle dominate in Trialeti assemblages.⁵³ In addition to livestock in these funerary contexts, the bones of wild animals were found on the floors of houses at Jinisi settlement. Palynological studies also provide evidence for both domestic and wild plants in the vicinity of the Jinisi settlement, and analyses of wheat pollen reveal the development of agricultural crop production in the 18–17th centuries BCE.⁵⁴

The landscape context of the kurgan and barrow fields provides further information on Middle Bronze Age social and spatial organisation. The kurgan and barrow burials are located on the high plateau and in the valley zones, and the burial fields often exhibit a temporal range, demonstrating that people returned to the location over numerous years.⁵⁵ Cycles of mobility concentrating on the highland plains and the valley are indicative of

bers; Martkopi barrow 4 and barrow 3 included an above ground timber burial chamber. Bedianashvili 2007; Kuftin 1941; Sagona 2004.

⁵¹ Edens 1995, p. 54. There are some instances of a principal burial (male) with a second individual (female) in a peripheral position within the burial chamber: Bedeni barrow 10; Bedeni barrow 5 (also including a youth); the Gadachrili-Gora burial near Bedeni (a male and a female secondary burial); barrow 1 at Namgalamitsa in Tbilisi: Bedianashvili 2007, p. 171; Kushnareva 1997, p. 231; Sagona 2004, p. 485–6.

⁵² For instance at the Tsnori kurgans in the Alazani valley: Dedabrishvili 1979.

⁵³ Kushnareva 1997, p. 93.

⁵⁴ Kvavadze and Narimanishvili 2011, p. 589.

⁵⁵ The Namgalamitsa barrow field in Tbilisi and the Trialeti kurgan complex, for example. Bedianashvili 2007.

pastoral lifestyles, in which groups move their herds between highland summer pastures and winter encampments in the lowlands. The investment of material and social resources in these locations, in the form of elaborate burials and scant settlements, defines them as significant places within the social landscape of the later Middle Bronze Age.

Distinctive Demarcation

The various human uses of space form a thematic thread linking theoretical discourse of the later twentieth century across the humanities and social sciences. Examining the concept of tenure takes in concerns of the material record at a regional scale as well as addressing the social significance of this record. Territory, as a sphere of action, forms a bridging concept between the spatial scale of landscape and models of social structure and agency.⁵⁶ The concept of tenure is bound with investigations of the expression of identity and authority within the landscape, and retains the flexibility of the human social networks that shape it. Without negating this flexibility, territories are typically structured around certain points of significance in the physical landscape.

These locations may be demarcated through the use of distinctive material culture or landscape modification. The Middle Bronze Age record of central Transcaucasia is identified on the basis of distinctive material traits, including technological, formal and decorative choices.⁵⁷ Ethnographic research has demonstrated that technical choices are not governed by geographic features or environmental pressures alone, rather these practices are “socially informed actions that reflect a shared understanding of how things are done”.⁵⁸ Hence, material style has meaning in social contexts and participates in non-verbal communication within and between social groups.⁵⁹ The use of the spatial distribution of distinctive material styles to interpret the social landscape is based in social theory, which argues that material style is active and conveys information. Unlike more precise forms of communication, such as text, material culture is less direct and can evoke numerous meanings and have numerous functions.⁶⁰ One role of shared

⁵⁶ Fleming 1998, p. 45.

⁵⁷ Dietler and Herbich 1998; Shanks and Tilley 1987; Hodder 1990; Sackett 1982; Lemonnier 1986; and see discussion in Conkey and Hastorf 1990, and Stark 1998a.

⁵⁸ Quotation from Stark 1998b, p. 5. On the topic, see also Conkey and Hastorf 1990; Hodder 1990; Mauss 1930; Wiessner 1985; Wobst 1977.

⁵⁹ Conkey 1990, p. 10–11.

⁶⁰ Material culture participates in processes of signification, although the relationship between material culture and meaning is not the same as that between text and language.

material traditions is the signification of group identity; hence the spatial distribution of distinctive material cultural assemblages united by style can serve to articulate the presence of a group within the landscape. In the Middle Bronze Age landscape of central Transcaucasia material assemblages form distributional clusters, places defined by tangible social investment. The nature and location of this demarcation is of interest in examining the expression of group presence within the landscape of Tbilisi.

The Middle Bronze Age in the Tbilisi Region

As outlined previously, the hallmarks of the Middle Bronze Age in Transcaucasia are striking wealth, partnered with marked social stratification, within a landscape defined by substantial barrow burials. The barrows of the Digomi Plain in Tbilisi differ in scale from those most famous examples at Trialeti, but integrate features of numerous barrow fields within the broader region. The structure of the Namgalamitsa burials, with their additional chambers containing pottery and the bones of sheep, are similar to those of southeastern Georgia and at Khanlar in western Azerbaijan.⁶¹ The ceramics are comparable to those found in barrows at Treli, and some bear standard comb-stamped triangles of the Trialeti tradition. Such comb-stamped ware is also found at Khanlar, southeast of Tbilisi, and at Kirovakan (Vanadzor) in Armenia, some 160 km southwest of Tbilisi.⁶²

The burials localised within Tbilisi are part of a much larger regional tradition. This is a cultural terrain in which Tbilisi is one point within the larger sphere of action; the similarities in material assemblages express the shared traditions of surrounding communities within an apparently contiguous territory. As distinctive cultural constructions, the barrow burials participate in creating and conveying social meaning within this territory. Social authority is built into the barrows, in terms of the material wealth deposited in the tombs and also the less tangible investment of time, energy and specialist craftsmanship required in their construction. The barrow structure itself is an articulation of socio-economic power through conspicuous consumption and of group identity through its distinctive structure and contents.

As material expressions of cultural identity and social power, the groups of barrow burials participate in the establishment of a landscape iconography.

Dietler and Herbich 1998, p. 244; Finnegan et al. 2000; Wiessner 1984 *cf.* Sackett 1977, p. 372.

⁶¹ Bedianashvili 2007, p. 171; Kakhiani and Ghlighvashvili 2008.

⁶² Bedianashvili 2007, p. 173; Kushnareva 1997; Martiriosan 1964; Mongait 1961, p. 131.

In a large territory with large interstices, characteristic of mobile or semi-mobile communities,⁶³ the placement of conspicuous identifying features is a means of spatial management. Studies of mobile communities in Eurasia, notably Barfield's work in Afghanistan, indicate that the environmental variability of mountainous territories can condition social practices of greater investment in demarcated locals.⁶⁴ In such instances, distinctive demarcation of specific places participates in the articulation of tenure. Within the region, the Digomi Plain at the head of the Tbilisi valley can be seen as one such demarcated place, in which particular social investment is evident in the context of burial (Fig. 3 and 4).⁶⁵ As I will now illustrate, statements of tenure are an active function of these barrow structures in the archaeological landscape of Tbilisi due to their clustered location, the interaction between the barrow burials and local landscape features, and the regional economic and social value of the location in which they are clustered.

The record of the Middle Bronze Age indicates that archaeological features from this period are clustered in the Digomi Plain.⁶⁶ All features in this region are barrow burials. Burial mounds in Transcaucasia are often grouped;⁶⁷ the social motivations for this extend beyond tenure but the grouped structures do have possessive implications. Returning to a similar region every year or season is necessary for the subsistence strategies of mobile and semi-mobile communities; performing elaborate burial rites in the same location as past years is more than this, it is tradition.⁶⁸ The accumulation of cultural features through repetitive use of a location creates impressions of longevity in the landscape, presence even at times when people are absent, and participates in establishing group tenure.

The prominence of the burial mounds in relation to the landscape features in the area where the burials are concentrated contributes to their identification as manmade constructions. The Digomi Plain is a naturally

⁶³ Cribb 1991; Popova 2006.

⁶⁴ Barfield 1981.

⁶⁵ The majority of burials are located in Digomi (8 of 11), but isolated burials do exist in other locations in the valley. There is a barrow reported in the district of Grmagele that was not able to be located in the field survey and the "Middle Bronze and Late Bronze barrows" in the district of Lilo were also not able to be located. The former location of a 'cemetery' in Ponichala (destroyed) was recorded during the survey.

⁶⁶ Supported by nearest-neighbour analyses performed on the dataset of all located archaeological features from the Middle Bronze Age in Tbilisi; performed a second time integrating this dataset with approximate points of Middle Bronze features whose precise location was not able to be recorded during survey (at one site each at Grmagele and at Lilo).

⁶⁷ At the major sites of Martkopi, Bedeni, Trialeti and Irganchai, amongst others.

⁶⁸ The practice of return and reuse of specific locations within the landscape functions in the construction of social memory and concepts of heritage.

enclosed area, flanked by the fringes of the Trialeti Range to the west and the Kura River bordering the plain to the east. Within this naturally sheltered zone everything about the form and structure of the burial mounds is designed to be prominent. In this landscape context of the broad, relatively flat region at the head of the valley, the scale and protruding structure of the burials contribute to their appearance as artificial landscape modifications. The two outlying burial sites, at Nakulbakebi and Treli, are respectively located at the narrowest point of the Kura River in the region and at the point at which the highlands draw close to the river, located at the northern and southern margins of the Digomi plain. Hence, the relationship between the burial mounds and the landscape in which they are sited contributes to the identification of the barrows as culturally constructed features within a demarcated zone, broadcasting the presence of the burial architects within the region.

The modern Digomi Plain presents an urban landscape of grassland and apartment blocks, with sparsely wooded foothills beyond (Fig. 5). Palynological records show that the Digomi Plain of the Middle Bronze Age was wooded with oak-ash forest, with oak savannah growing on the foothills above.⁶⁹ Within the flat, bounded and forested plain the stone-and-earth covered burial mounds form conspicuous constructions, making a statement within the landscape.⁷⁰ In a pattern of occupation where movement is the dominant theme, as is proposed for the Middle Bronze Age communities, the barrow fields of Digomi form an enduring expression of group identity in association with other barrow fields within the region. Their prominence within the landscape ensures this expression is conveyed even when the community itself is not present in the valley. In a pastoral economy in which land equates to prosperity and power, a function of demarcating the landscape with these prominent symbols of group identity is to legitimise tenure within the region.

Moving from a localised to a more regional perspective on the landscape in which the Middle Bronze Age people lived, the broader economic and social significance of the river plain at Tbilisi is also relevant to the potential role of the prominent burial mounds in group tenure. The valley is on a major historical passage east-west through Transcaucasia and north-south between the highlands; the head of the Tbilisi valley marks a physiographic threshold in this landscape (see inset, Fig. 1). Topographic variability in central Transcaucasia results in a diverse environmental range between river

⁶⁹ Connor 2006.

⁷⁰ Connor and Sagona 2007, p. 35.

valley and high plateau. Within the Tbilisi region, the Kura and Aragvi Rivers and the surrounding highlands respectively intersect and frame the Tbilisi plain. The meeting of highlands and rivers distinguishes the Tbilisi region as a threshold. These landscape features are not entirely constant, varying slightly within geomorphological timeframes,⁷¹ but create an enduring physical threshold between the open Kura River plain to the southeast of Tbilisi and the central Georgian Gori plain and Caucasus Mountains to the north. The meeting of the highland fringes, visibly dividing the plains, together with the confluence of major waterways clearly shape the physical landscape. The degree to which physical features influence the form of social landscapes is highly contextualised with respect to the geography and the social groups in question but, whilst the physical geography of the area does not dictate human negotiation of space, it does influence the range of possibilities available. This valley is also an ecologically significant location, with an ecotone between forest and steppe vegetation running through the Tbilisi plain. This distinctive physical geography and ecology may have contributed to demarcation of this region.

Furthermore, the Tbilisi valley exists at a strategic point within ancient and modern Eurasia, on one of the oldest routes connecting the Eurasian Steppe to the north with the plains to the south. The route passes along the Kura River valley, through the Skhaltba and Zedazeni Mountains at the head of the Tbilisi valley, and follows the Aragvi River gorge into the mountains. This route leads to and from one of the few passes through the main Caucasus Range: the Daryal Pass.⁷² The cultural significance of this route is highlighted in ancient references to Daryal, which include *Porta Cumana* and *Fortes Sarmatica*, in the Graeco-Roman geographical texts of Strabo and Ptolemy respectively.⁷³ Cultural interactions are also evident in the origin of the modern name, which derives from the Persian *Dār-e Ālān*, the Gate of the Alans.⁷⁴ These were a group amongst the Sarmatian people who, like the Cumans, dwelt in the Eurasian Steppe north of the Caucasus. In the nineteenth century the Daryal route through the Caucasus between Tbilisi and Vladikavkaz became the Georgian Military Highway, highlighting the continuing relevance of this ancient passage in regional interactions.

⁷¹ Fleming 1998, p.45; Janelidze 1980, p. 74–5 on the geomorphology of the Aragvi River and Gori plain; Tsagareli 1964, p.338–9 on the Kura River, Ksani River and Aragvi River.

⁷² Known to the Romans as the Caucasian Gates. Strabo refers to the Daryal Gorge as the *Porta Caucasica* and also the *Porta Cumana*.

⁷³ Strabo's *Geographica*, first century BCE to first century CE; Ptolemy's *Geographia*, first to second centuries CE.

⁷⁴ Encyclopedia Britannica 11th edition.

In a lifestyle incorporating seasonal movement, as the limited record of settlement suggests is the case for central Transcaucasian communities during the Middle Bronze Age, the role of this valley as a regional passage may have contributed to the desire to demarcate the plain at the head of the Tbilisi valley.

Concluding remarks

This paper has outlined the Middle Bronze Age record of the Tbilisi region and has investigated the potential role of prominent burial mounds in expressions of tenure. The archaeological landscape is dominated by these burial mounds, grouped to form places of enduring social investment created over archaeological timeframes. The mortuary mounds in the Digomi Plain certainly represent more than mere place markers, but their form and location within their landscape context suggests that they were constructed and positioned to enhance their interpretation as distinctive cultural structures on the plain. Landscapes and places defined by cultural demarcation have a reciprocal structuring relationship with social interactions and expectations.⁷⁵ Concrete spatiality, such as the construction of the burial mounds, is a forum for social production and reproduction and landscape is both a canvas for culturally distinctive demarcation and the medium for enhancing this expression. Within the middle Kura River valley, the burial mounds provide an enduring manifestation of the people who built them. The impression of longevity in the landscape which these monuments provide articulates a cultural presence even at times when people are absent and participates in establishing group tenure.

With this longevity in mind, the burial mounds are more than merely static features and have relevance beyond their immediate period of construction. Time, place and landscape are intimately connected in cultural frameworks of meaning in which the landscape is an ongoing medium of social expression and exchange. In the centuries of the Middle Bronze Age, and indeed long afterward, people have continued to use and modify the landscape around the existing barrows in the plain. Throughout this time, the burials attest to the group's presence in the region and project traces of their heritage beyond the present and into the future. New understandings of social space and landscape may transform the interpretation of the mounds and their role in the social landscape, but the structures remain

⁷⁵ Fleming 1998, p. 61.

within this palimpsest as a mark of previous cultural frameworks active in the Tbilisi valley. The distinctive modification of this landscape by the Middle Bronze Age people certainly sheds light on past perceptions of spatiality, tenure and social engagement with the landscape.

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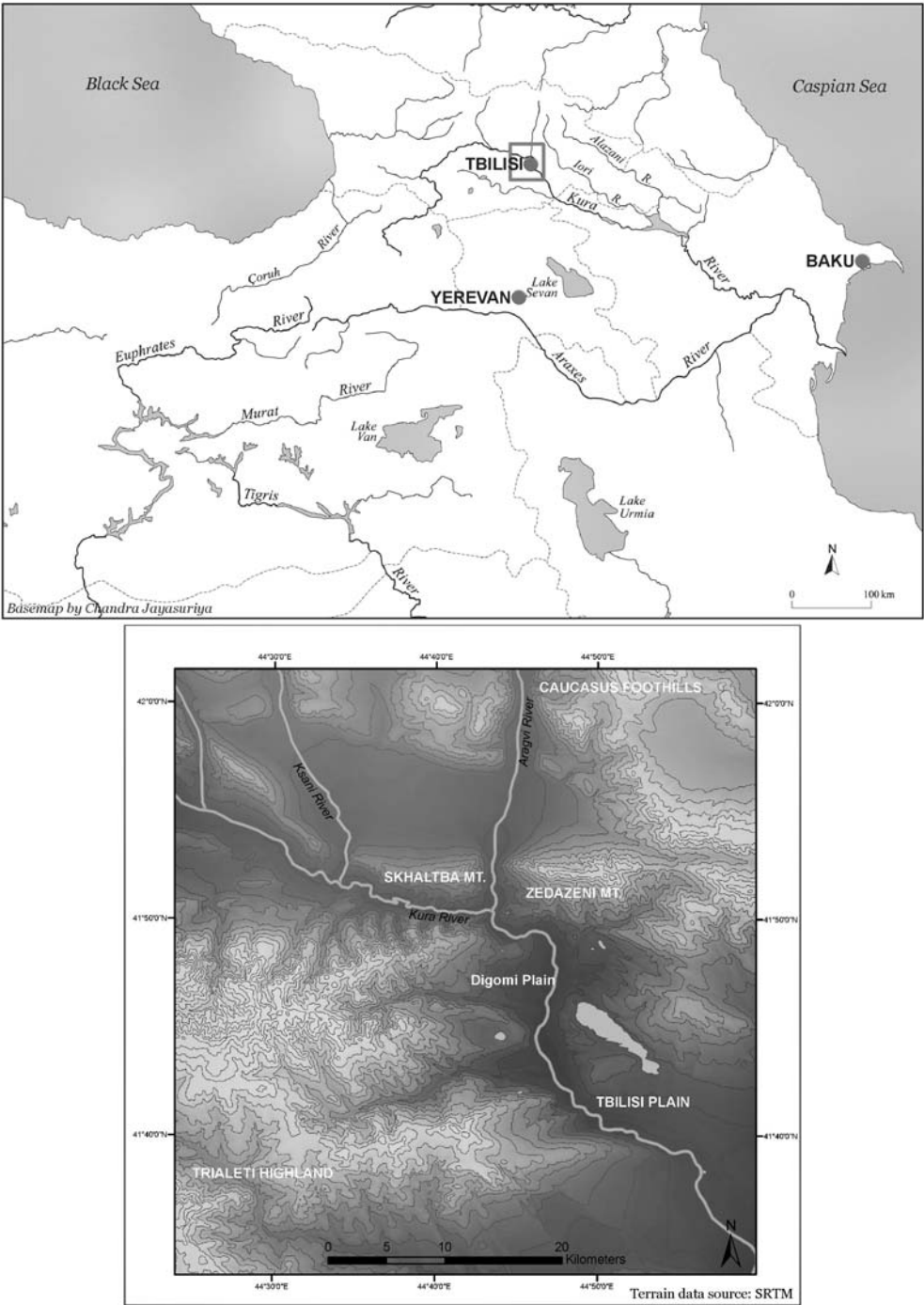


Fig. 1. The Southern Caucasus showing detail of the middle Kura River valley region at Tbilisi.

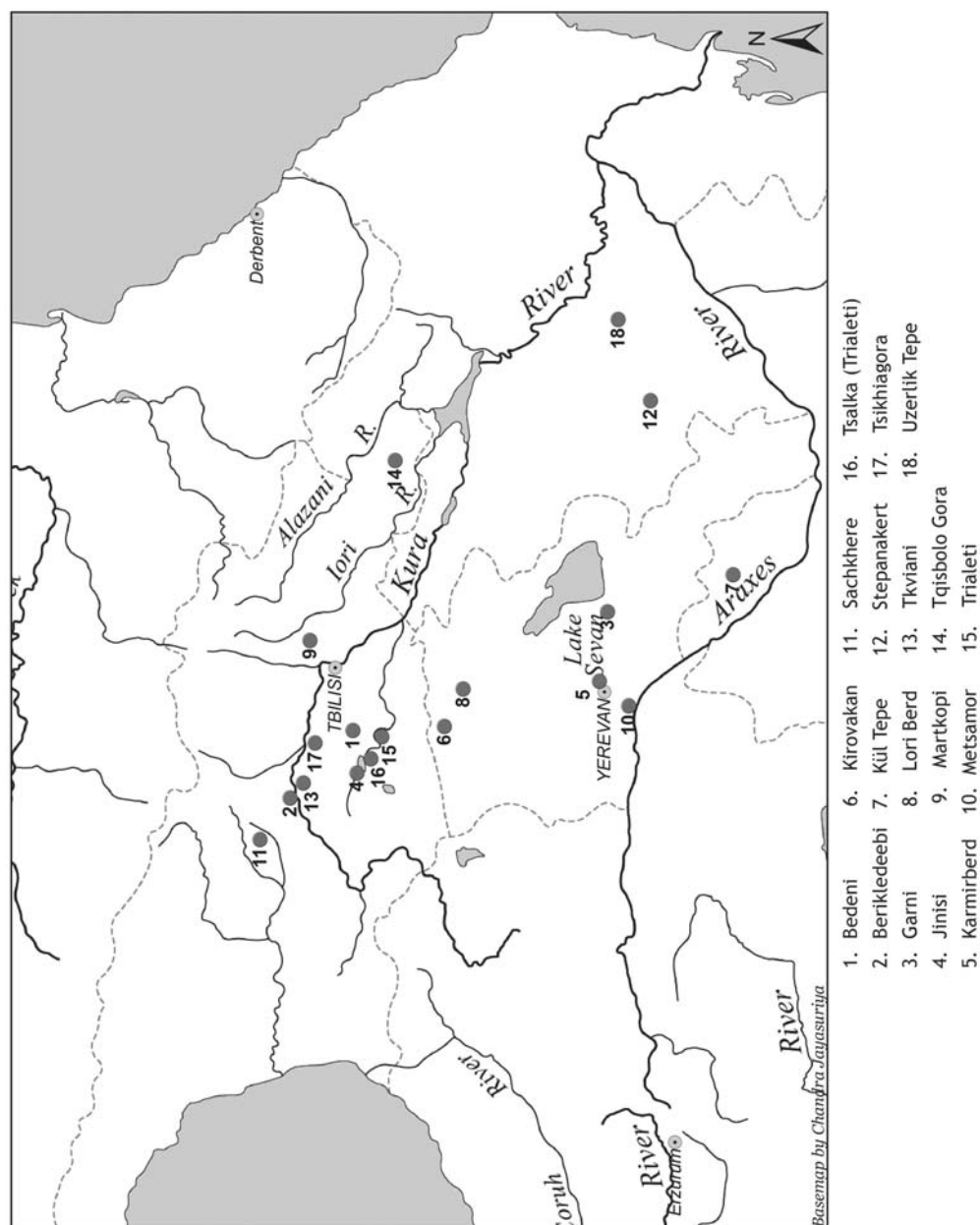


Fig. 2. Selected archaeological sites of the Middle Bronze Age in Transcaucasia.

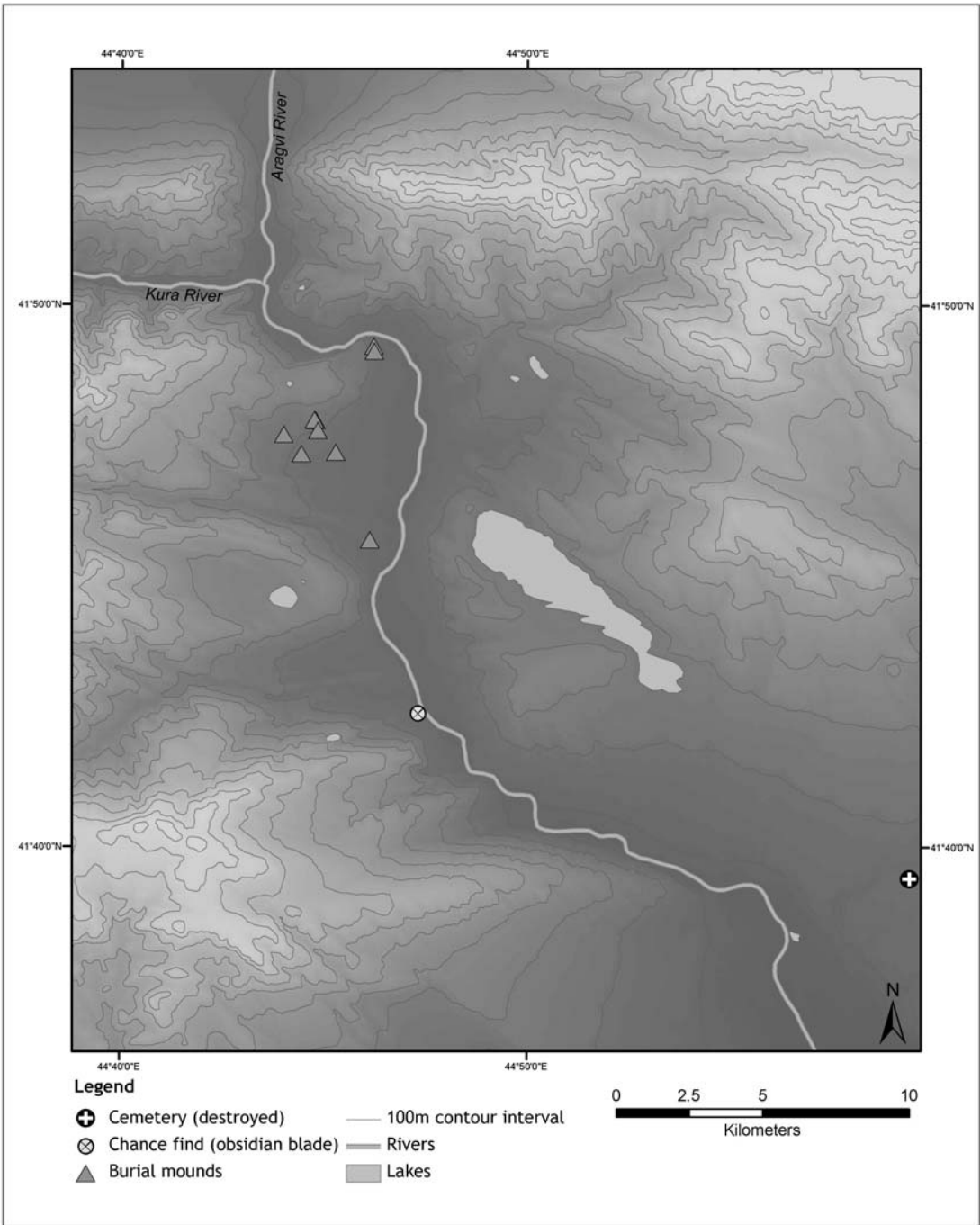


Fig. 3. Middle Bronze Age archaeological features in the Tbilisi valley.

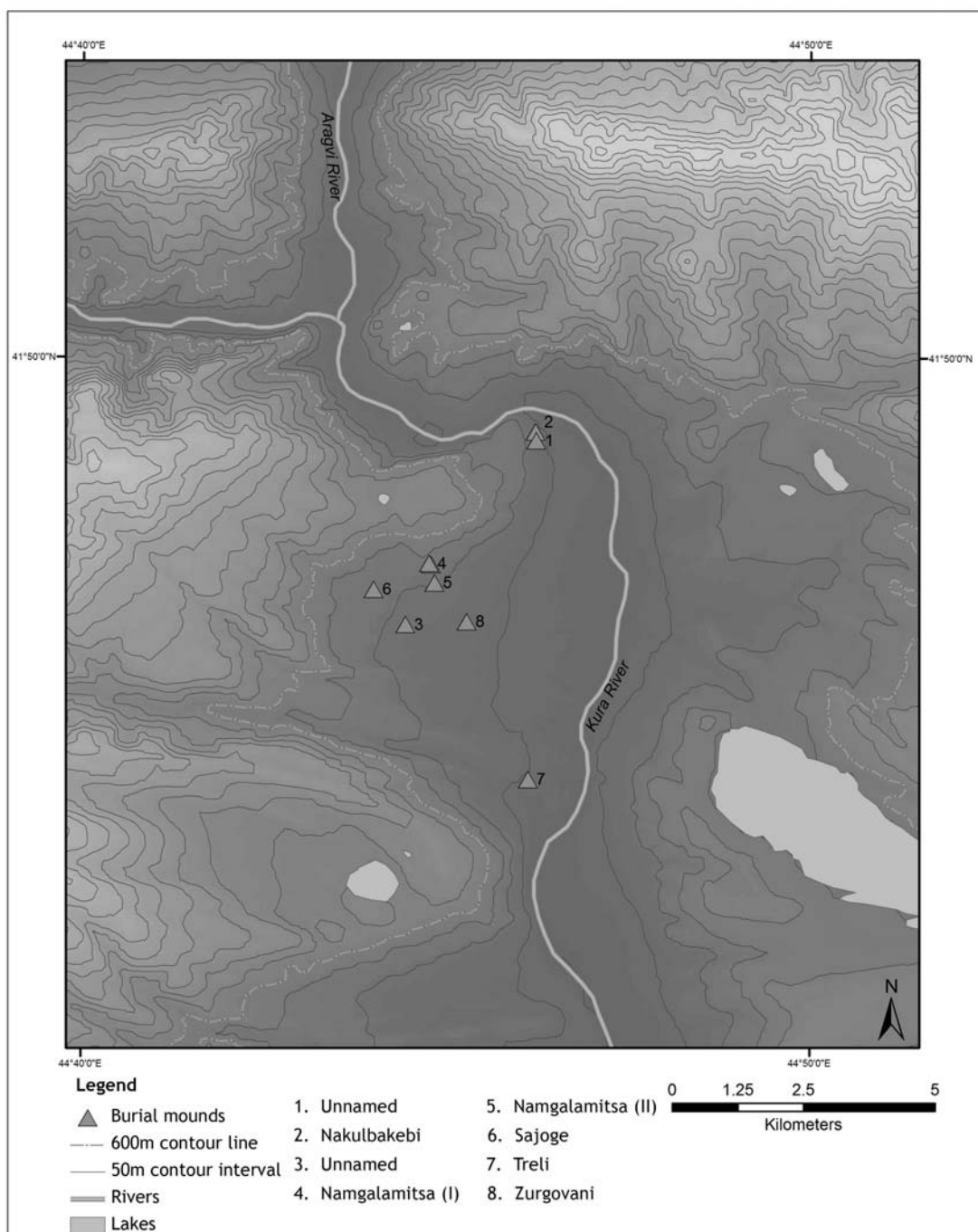


Fig. 4. Middle Bronze Age burial mounds in the Digomi Plain.



Fig. 5. The modern Digomi Plain, looking north, is vegetated with grassland and flanked by sparsely wooded foothills.

Excavation at Lavin Tepe in Northwest Iran

Alireza Hejebri NOBARI, Ali BINNANDEH, Javad NEYESTANI and
Hamed Vahdati NASAB

Department of Archaeology Tarbiat Modares University,
Tehran, IRAN
E-Mail: Hejebri@modares.ac.ir

Abstract

The Little Zab River rises in the northwest mountains of Piranshahr, northwest of Iran. It flows southwards to the west of Iran to join Iraq via the Alan passage. The basin of the river has many ancient sites, including Lavin Tepe, one of the most important prehistoric sites located in West Azerbaijan, Iran. It is in north of the Zab River basin, the south of Urmia Lake. Seven periods have been identified through recent excavations. The most intensive period of occupation was the Chalcolithic. Important too is the presence of Uruk pottery, including the beveled-rim bowl, at four sites in Zab basin.

Geography: The Boundaries and size of the Zab basin

The Zab River basin contains the cities of Piranshahr and Sardasht in West Azerbaijan and parts of Bane in Kurdistan. The Zab River rises from the northwest highlands of Piranshahr and after joining many branches passes from the highlands of Alan in Iran and enters Iraq. The extension of this basin is a relatively vertical strip along the Iran-Iraq border and the little Zab River. Its orientation is northwest to southeast and from west to east. The Zab basin is located in an area with a cold and temperate mountainous climate, a Mediterranean rainfall regime, with average annual temperatures between 11 / 7° C to 13 / 3° C and its annual rainfall is 700 ml.¹

The Zab basin is exposed to rainy winds, its vegetation is sparse and areas of dense forest, contain trees of oak, Ors, wild pistachio (Qzvan),

¹ Khezri 2000, p. 12.

almonds and tamarisk. It is located in the Urmia - Sanandaj – Sirjan geology zone also known as Sanandaj – Sirjan, which is northeast of the high Zagros. In northwestern parts of this zone in which the Zab basin forms a part, Laramie geologic factors have created severe transformations.

Archaeological studies in West Azerbaijan

North West Iran with its similar climate conditions and proximity to Anatolia, Mesopotamia, and Naxjavan, has a particular importance in the archaeology of different prehistoric and historical periods. The specific geographical situation of the North West of Iran and especially West Azerbaijan in ancient times, as the meeting place of important ancient cultures has attracted the attention of many scholars and archaeologists. Hence Louie Vandenberg called this area a crossroads for the passing of nations and trading; from the beginning of the scientific and modern archaeological studies in the early decades of the nineteenth century, this area has been frequently studied and excavated by both Iranian and foreign archaeologists.

Coon,² Stein,³ Kearton,⁴ Solecki and the Italian group supervised by Pecorella and Salvini⁵ had all studied in this area, which this is convincing evidence of the archaeological importance and abundance of ancient and historical monuments in this area.⁶ Excavations have also been carried out from 1969 to 1978 by German archaeologists in Bastam, and an English group supervised by Burney in Haftavan⁷ and Yanik⁸, also Swiny surveyed a large area in the northwest of Iran.⁹ Basic archaeological studies in the south of lake Urmia have started with the Hassanlu project excavations by Dyson and his team in the south of this territory in Hassanlu,¹⁰ Dinkha Tepe,¹¹ Agrab Tepe¹² and Kord-Lar Tepe.¹³ Prehistoric sites such as Hajji

² Coon 1951.

³ Stein 1940.

⁴ Kearton 1969, 1970.

⁵ Pecorella and Salvini 1984.

⁶ Solecki 1999; Solecki and Solecki 1973.

⁷ Burney 1970a, 1970b, 1972, 1973, 1974, 1975, 1976a, 1976b, 1979a.

⁸ Burney 1961, 1962, 1964.

⁹ Swiny 1975.

¹⁰ Muscarella 2006.

¹¹ Muscarella 1974.

¹² Muscarella 1973.

¹³ Lippert 1979.

Firuz,¹⁴ Dalma,¹⁵ Pizdelli,¹⁶ Goy Tepe¹⁷ and Gijlar and Baló were excavated before the Iranian revolution. In recent years Iranian archaeologists have conducted many surveys and excavations in this territory for example, continuing the Hassanlu excavations¹⁸ and Qalaichi Tepe¹⁹ which is a Manaiyans site, and Jolbar Tepe,²⁰ a Neolithic site near Lake Urmia.

The little Zab basin

Stein had visited some of the ancient sites in north of this basin.²¹ Kliess mentioned one Neolithic and some Iron Age sites in this basin and Kroll mentioned some Iron Age (I) sites in Piranshahr²². In recent years, Kargar²³ and Heydari²⁴ have excavated at Tepe Rabat near Sardasht. As mentioned above most studies range from the proto-historic to the historical period, prehistoric studies are limited (Fig. 1: 1).

Lavin Tepe

Lavin Tepe is located in West Azerbaijan Province, in the north of the Zab basin, south of Lake Urmia (Fig. 1: 2). This Tepe is about 1.5 hectares in area and 15 m in height, it is situated 4 km east of Piranshahr and at 36°41'22" longitude and 45°11'46" latitude. In the past the size of Tepe had been larger but the northern area Tepe has been destroyed by recent agricultural activities. The surface findings of a preliminary survey show that Lavin Tepe had been used in the Neolithic period, Chalcolithic period and Iron Age. The Ushnu-Solduz valley is separated from this region by small hills. The Haji Omran passage in west of Piranshahr connects this region to the north of Mesopotamia.

Based on surface data, Lavin Tepe is a suitable place for studying the prehistoric periods of the northwest of Iran and also the architecture and pottery of the Dalma culture. An item of note was the existence of an Uruk

¹⁴ Voigt 1983.

¹⁵ Hamlin 1975.

¹⁶ Dyson and Young 1960.

¹⁷ Brown 1951.

¹⁸ Khatib-Shahidi 2006.

¹⁹ Kargar 2005.

²⁰ Razaghi and Fahemi 1996.

²¹ Stein 1940.

²² Kroll 2005a; 2005b.

²³ Kargar and Binandeh 2009.

²⁴ Heydari 2010.

sherd on the surface of the site. This observation is a first for the northwest of Iran.

Excavation

After studying the topography of Tepe and the distribution of surface relics, two stratigraphy trenches were excavated. To the north of Tepe where agricultural activities had revealed ancient layers the first trench was dug in the highest part of the hill and in north-south direction, where the least volume of material was expected. A three meter wide trench was excavated (Fig. 2: 1). Trench B was marked out at the northern end of trench A in a location that was expected to produce many finds. The trench was 1100 cm from the foot of the Tepe where it was levelled by agricultural activities with dimensions of 3×3 m (Fig. 2: 2).

Stratigraphy of Trench A

Upper relics of the trench belonged to the Islamic period, identified by green monochrome glaze of the sherds. In terms of architecture, there was no substantial evidence except several irregularly broken pieces of rubble, many similar pieces being scattered on the northern slope of the Tepe.

Period Ib

In this section there were signs of two lateral brick walls, running north to the south and east to west. The east-west wall consists of a row of bricks the north-south wall being wider (Fig. 3: 1). These relics are probably part of a square brick structure, in some cases signs of heat and burning can be seen. In the eastern section there are some bricks and rubble, although they are irregular show part of a structure, also rubble with approximate dimension 40×30 cm which was visible in the southwest corner (Fig. 3: 2). Under these pieces of rubble an intact vessel was found. In this layer sherds belonging to the Islamic period and Chalcolithic sherds were found mixed together. It seems that because of the construction activities during the time of medieval Islamic settlement in Lavin Tepe, Chalcolithic pottery have come to the surface and been mixed with Islamic remains.

Finds

An earthen spindle whorl with a diameter of 3.3 cm, pieces of glass, the horn of an animal (possibly goat), an oval shaped stone pendant, pieces of a grinding stone and an earthen vessel are the most important finds in this layer.

Period II

The upper layer belongs to the Chalcolithic period. Pottery and architectural evidence were uncovered. Parts of the wall of a structure were seen in the southern, eastern and western sections of the trench. The height of the remains is about one meter. This structure is made of two different size mud-bricks, the larger dimensions are 50×30 cm and smaller are 40×20 cm. They are locked together with a layer of 2×4 cm of mortar filling the space between the mud-bricks. The limitation on excavation volume precludes commenting about the size, kind and application of this structure (Fig. 3: 3).

Under the remains of layer II in the eastern and western section, evidence of ash, mixed irregularly with smaller cobble stones was visible. In the southern section several mud-bricks were found dispersed, on their sides a layer of ash can be seen. No architectural structure could be discerned.

Finds

An earthen spindle whorl, bone awls and pieces of earthenware are the most abundant finds from this layer.

Period III a

This layer contained evidence of an architectural structure made by long and drawn non-template mud-bricks (cigarette shaped mud-brick) which almost covers all of the southern section and parts of the eastern and western sections. The gap between the mud-bricks was filled with a thin mortar, which sometimes became convex, owing to the pressure and weight of the mud-bricks. Their lengths are between 50–65 cm and the thicknesses are 7–10 cm. Their height is 0/5 meters.

Finds

A piece of shell.

Period III b

About 20 cm lower than layer IIIa in the southern section three rows of mud-bricks could be seen whose features and size are similar to mud-bricks of layer IIIa. These remains stretched to part of the eastern section, but they are not seen in the western section. Parts of the center of this structure are located on an ash layer (Fig. 4: 1). Its west side is destroyed and is not regular however its direction is distinctive in three rows in the surface of the trench which is indicative of a structure or a mud-brick platform.

Finds

A stone ring and 2 small earthenware vessels are the most noticeable finds in this layer.

The distance between layers III and IV was filled by brown colored soil, whereas in some places there was broken mud-bricks in different sizes and sometimes signs of mortar but no sign of any visible structure.

Period IV

It contains part of a mud-brick wall belonging to a structure with features and size similar to the mud-bricks of layers IIIa and IIIb (Fig. 4: 2). The height of the remains reaches to 40 cm.

Finds

An earthen spindle whorl and pieces of shells were found in this layer. The remains of a mat could be recognized under this layer.

Stratigraphy of Trench B

Trench B, an extension of the lower part of Trench A, was exactly 1100 cm away from the Tepe foot and 3 × 3 m in size. Remains of the first 5 cm (pieces of sherd, bone, river cobblestones and so on) were not collected. Pieces of broken brick and two pieces of Islamic turquoise glaze pottery were observed.

Period V

In the upper sections of this layer pieces of mud-bricks in poor condition and with no particular order were found. The main structure found in this layer is part of the wall foundation which ran in a northwest-southeast direction continuing on into a non-excavated space (Fig. 5: 1). This foundation was constructed with river cobblestones and its upper remains have disappeared. The average wall thickness was about 40 cm (Fig. 5: 2).

Finds

An earthen spindle whorl, several pieces of shell and stoneware are the most noticeable findings of this layer.

Period VI

About 285 cm in depth in the northwest corner of Trench B, accumulated cobblestones were found extending to a non-excavated space out of the trench. Most probably these cobblestones have been part of a wall foundation similar to layer V (Fig. 4: 3).

Period VII

In the north of this trench a mass of soft soil, which extended in a slope from the north toward the center of the trench and was likely torrential (fine sand) was located. Sherds obtained from this layer were inadequately fired and mostly deep brown in color with a vegetal temper. Other sherds were simple and coarse and painted, elegant pottery being found rarely.

Ceramics

Most of the ceramics in Lavin Tepe are Dalma type. These were found in levels ranging from strata III to strata VII and are very similar to Dalma Tepe pottery. All of the Dalma pottery is handmade, most frequently of heavily chaff-tempered clay with small grit inclusions. While generally fired to a pink to orange-buff colour, cores or cores' centers are often grey. The pottery tends to fracture unevenly, and is relatively friable. A few sherds are marked by a greenish tinge, and in some cases the paint became slightly vitrified in firing. There are four major categories of surface treatment in the ceramics of strata III to VII. These are (1) painted, (2) surface-manipulated, (3) red-slipped (4) plain (Figs. 7: 2, 8: 1-2, 9: 1-2, 10: 1-2).

The Dalma assemblage flourished in northwestern Iran south and west of Lake Urmia. These are confined to the northern and central Zagros Mountains and in northeastern Iraq.²⁵ Also this pottery has been found in Azerbaijan.²⁶ The Dalma ceramic tradition did not spread eastward onto the Iranian Plateau, nor did it reach southward into southern Luristan and Khuzestan.²⁷

Conclusion

In the preliminary survey of Tepe before excavation, finds (Fig. 5: 3-6) and pottery sherds belonging to the Islamic period, Iron age, Bronze age, Chalcolithic period and some pottery which could possibly be attributed to the Neolithic period were visible. The excavation stratigraphy, likenesses and positioning of cultural periods of the Little Zab River basin aligns with the chronology found in the Lake Urmia basin. The excavation resulted in seven periods being identified (Fig. 6: 1).

²⁵ Hamlin 1975.

²⁶ Bakhshaliyev 2006, p. 51.

²⁷ Henrickson 1987.

Due to the limitations in excavating the oldest period, no architectural remains were found and finds were limited. It seems that this layer is related to the late Neolithic and early Chacolithic period; however, results of Radiocarbon data are not conclusive. Based on the surface data, in the Little Zab basin, six sites belonging to the late Neolithic have been identified. The Solduz plain (and Haji Firuz) in the Neolithic period was a marshy plain.²⁸ Haji-firuz was not very large in that period, but unlike the Zab basin there had been favorable conditions for settlement. However, lack of sites belonging to the early Neolithic is problematic. The longest period of settlement in Lavin belongs to the Chacolithic period.

The excavation results of Haji-Firuz and Dalma show that there is a gap between them.²⁹ In the south of the Urmia basin, a site which could fill this gap is not reported. In fact, one of the research objectives in Lavin Tepe was to fill this gap. In any case, given the gradual change of pottery that was observed and the presence of Dalma pottery in layers III - VI that gradually becomes more prominent, it is possible to say that in Little Zab Basin this gap is not seen or it is less evident. Lavin pottery studies shows that this pottery was produced at the site.

In one case the interior surface of one pot is coated with tar. Except for two human teeth no kind of burial was observed, and moreover like Dalma Tepe no statues have been found. In this period, we are faced with an increasing population, and the need for more space and access to resources has led to the dispersion of settlements. The sites in the north of the basin are in small valleys and plains between the mountains and are linear in shape. The widespread and abnormal geographical dispersion of Dalma pottery in the west of Iran is of importance. This pottery covers districts in the central and northern Zagros and along with Halaf and Ubaid pottery is prominent in Hamrin in the east of Iraq. Solecki argued that nomads were the factor in the dispersion of this pottery,³⁰ which is considerable. Hamlin refers to wider connections and mentions Mesopotamia, the Kermanshah and adjacent regions.³¹ In any case the existence of noteworthy Chalcolithic sites in the Dalma period shows its widespread relationship with urban areas and Mesopotamia.

Despite the vast spread of Halaf culture in Mesopotamia and adjacent regions, it is not evident in the Solduz plain.³² Also in the Zab basin, at least based on the surface findings, there is no evidence of Halaf culture.

²⁸ Voigt 1983, p. 281.

²⁹ Hamlin 1975, p. 120.

³⁰ Hole 1987.

³¹ Hamlin 1975.

³² Dyson and Young 1960.

Although there is little evidence of Pisdili culture in the Lake Urmia basin, little study has been done in this field and the influence of Pisdili culture, at least in northern district of Zab basin, is evident. Some of the pottery sherds in Lavin layer II may be attributed to Pisdili culture.

Up to now, in the northwest of Iran evidence of Ubaid cultural relations have been reported in Pisdili. Chronologically the Pisdili period belongs to about 3200-3900 BC and it is contemporary with Hassanlu VIII. A little distance from the Pisdili Tepe at Goy Tepe near Urmia, M tranche and M and N phases at Goy Tepe are chronologically later than Hassanlu VIII,³³ the continuation relations with Ubaid in 3000 BC is visible in M layer of Goy Tepe.

Another important case is the identification Uruk pottery in four sites in the Zab basin. Although in stratigraphy of Lavin, Uruk pottery has not found, in a superficial survey of this site several pieces of beveled-rim bowl pottery have been seen. This pottery is not seen in the northwest of Iran yet and is not in evidence in the higher regions of Hamadan. Beveled-rim bowl pottery is found in considerable numbers in these four sites. For this type of pottery various meanings are proposed depending upon where they were found.³⁴ If we consider this pottery as the late Uruk period, that is late fourth millennium BC, at this time we see social complexity accelerating in the Middle East. In some areas these bowls are one of the signs proto-urbanism. If we consider the existence of beveled-rim pottery in the late Chalcolithic period as sign for proto-urbanism in this basin, then it has entered into urbanization before other regions in northwest of Iran and Lake Urmia basin.

The late Chalcolithic settlements in the northwest of Iran change in the following Early Transcaucasia period.³⁵ This period is mostly characterized by gray monochrome pottery. However, in the south of Lake Urmia, Kura Araxes pottery is scarce.³⁶ Although Kroll mentions six early bronze sites in Piranshahr and Sardasht (Zab River basin) district, two sites from which ETC pottery was collected³⁷ this pottery is very scarce in the Zab River basin.

It seems that in the Zab basin there is evidence that all of these cultures fill gaps in the chronological and cultural continuity of the northwest of Iran, or at least the south of the Lake Urmia basin. It must be noted how-

³³ Helwing 2005.

³⁴ Abdi 1999; Goulder 2010.

³⁵ Talai 2004; Kroll 2004.

³⁶ Danti *et al.* 2004, p. 588.

³⁷ Kroll 2004, p. 119.

ever that some of these cases do not provide much evidence of a cultural presence, for example Uruk culture in the Solduz plain. But this may be due to a lack of research in these areas up to this point. But at least in one site (Lavin Tepe), evidence of Dalma, Pisdeli and Uruk pottery (beveled-rim bowl) are seen together.

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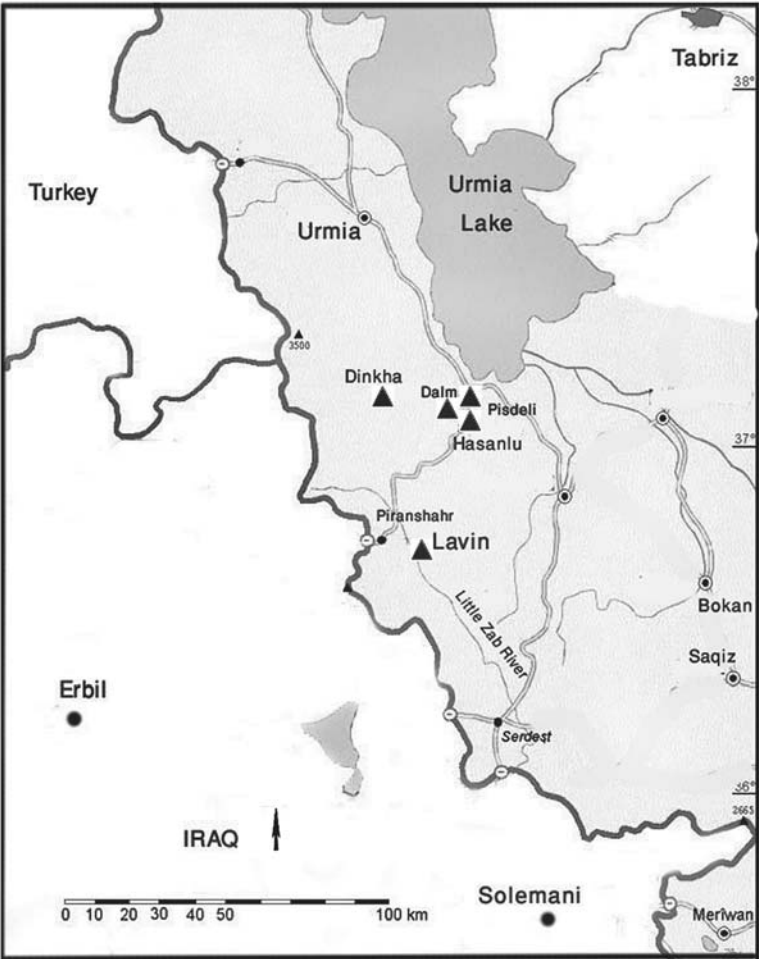


Fig. 1: 1 Location of the Zab basin in northwest of Iran; 2 Tepe Lavin seen from the east.

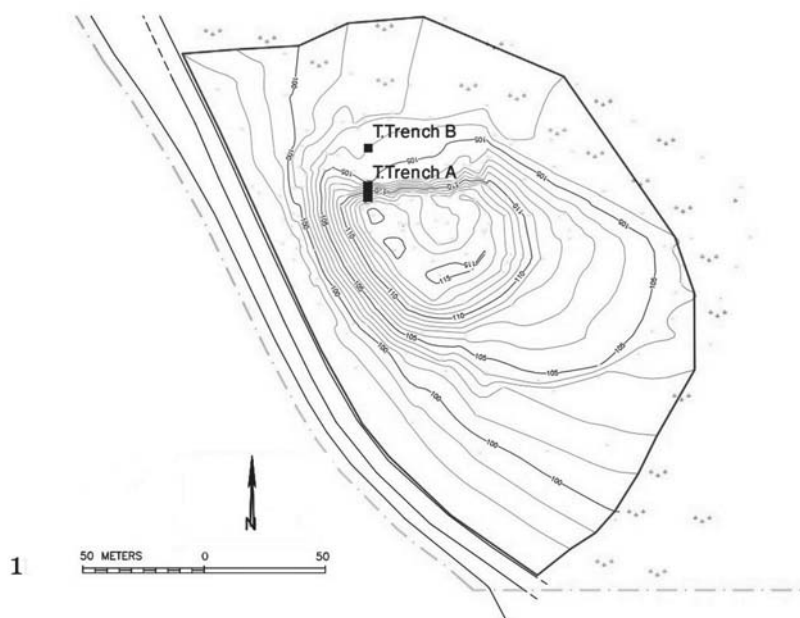


Fig. 2: 1 Topographic plan of Tepe Lavin showing the location of Trench A and B;
2 The location of Trench A and B at the northern edge of the mound.

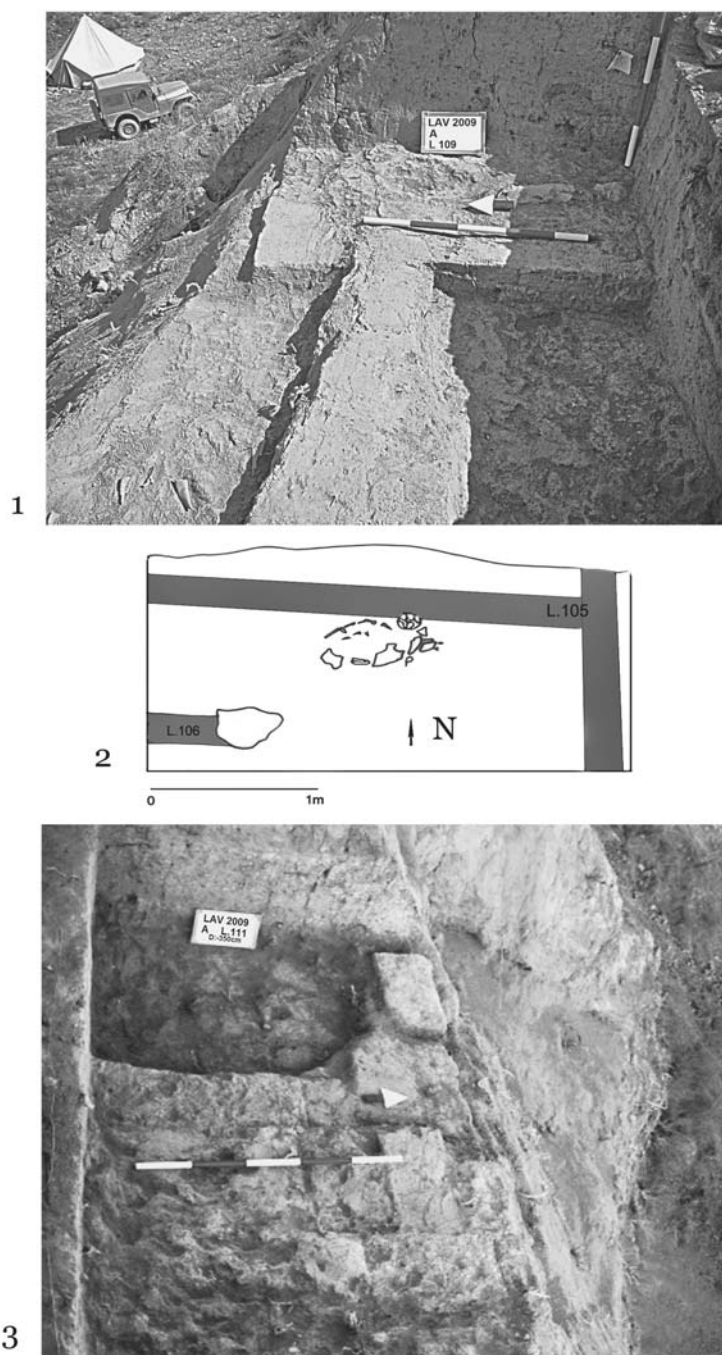


Fig. 3: 1 Period Ib structure; 2 Plan of Period Ib structure;
3 Period II, mud-brick structure.

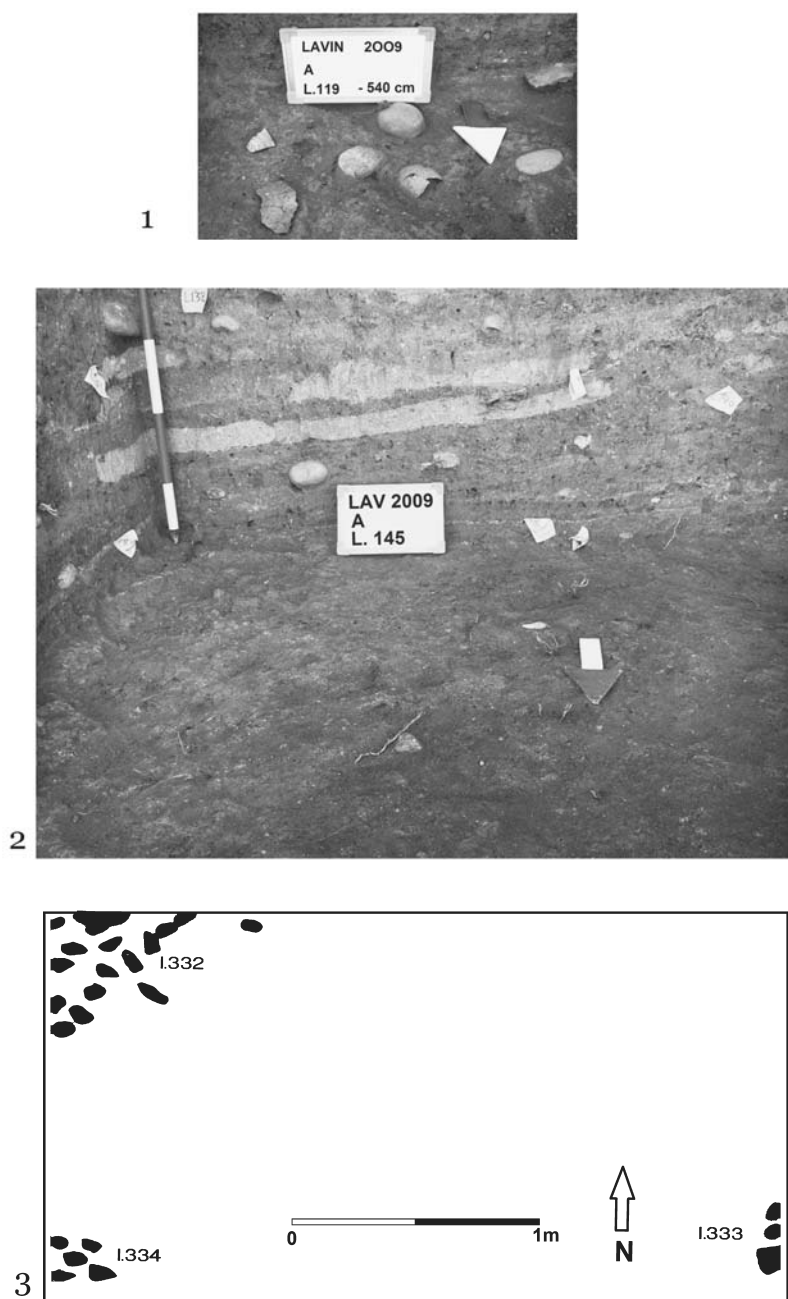


Fig. 4:1 Period IIIb pottery *in situ* within ash layer; 2 Period II mud-brick structure in cross section; 3 Period VI wall foundations constructed with cobbles.

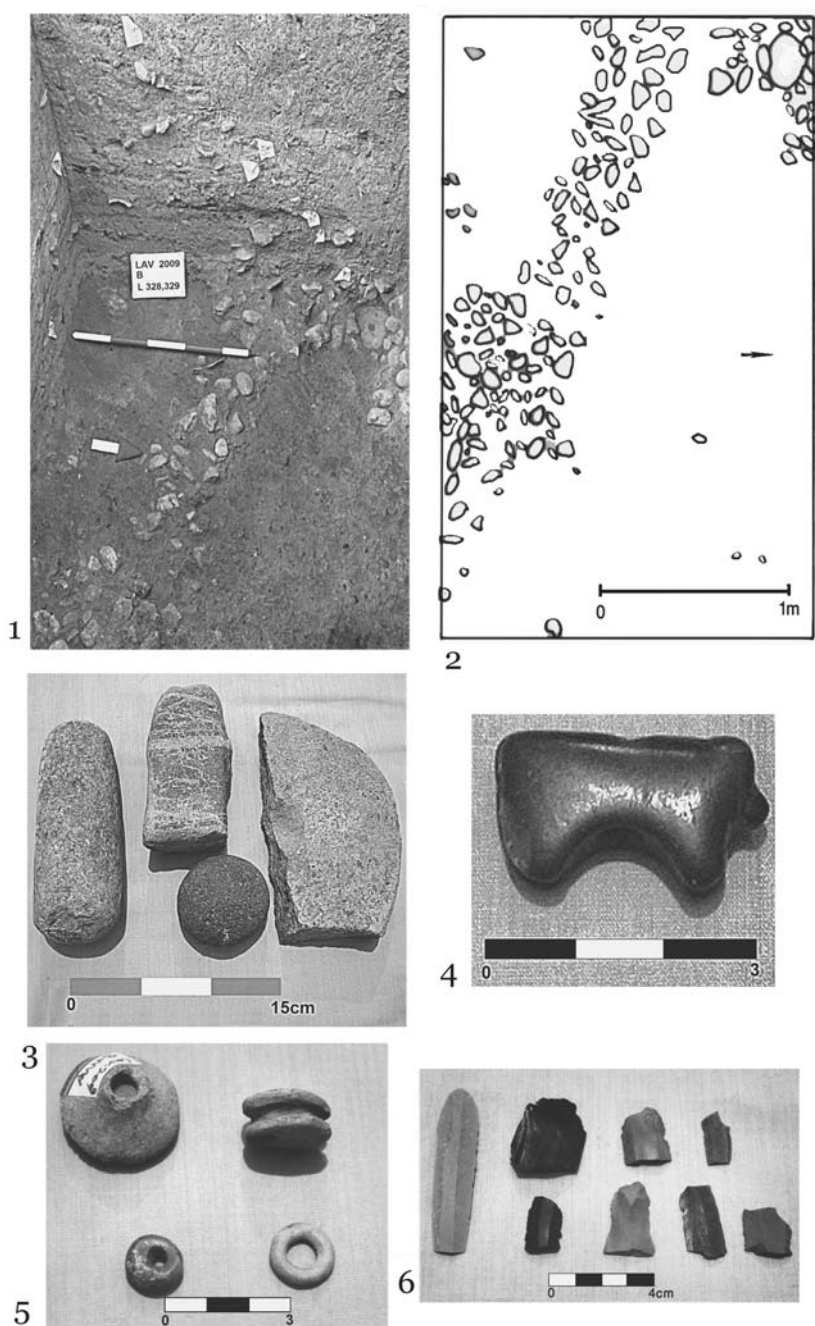
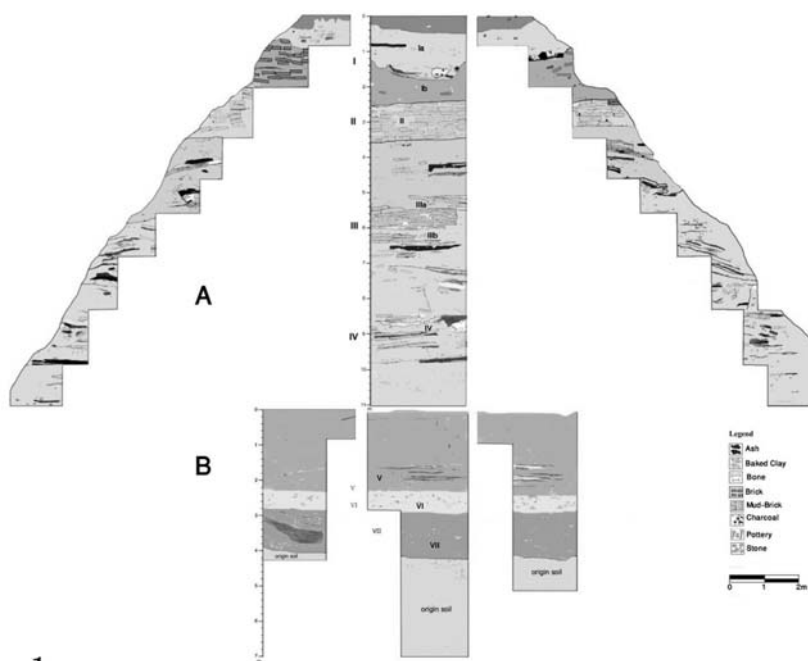
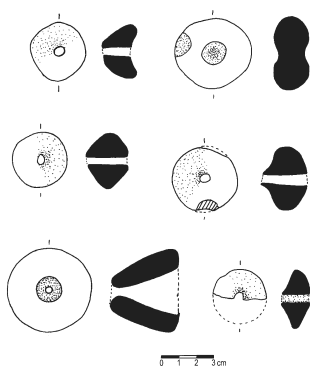


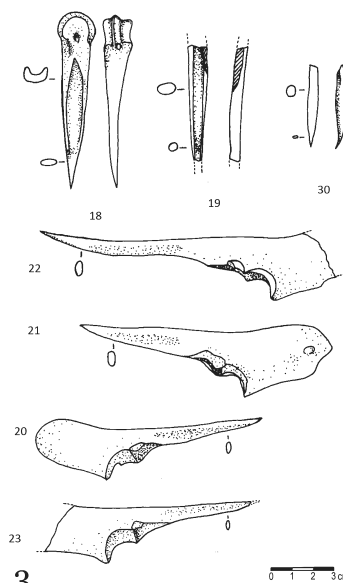
Fig. 5: 1 Period V wall foundations constructed with Cobblestones; 2 foundation of wall with Cobblestones; 3 Period??? grinding stone; 4 Period??? stone figurine of cattle; 5 Period??? small finds; 6 Period??? stone tools



1



2



3

Fig. 6: 1 Tepe Lavin, Trench A and B stratigraphic sequence in cross section; 2 Period???? terracotta spindle whorls; 3 Period?? bone points.

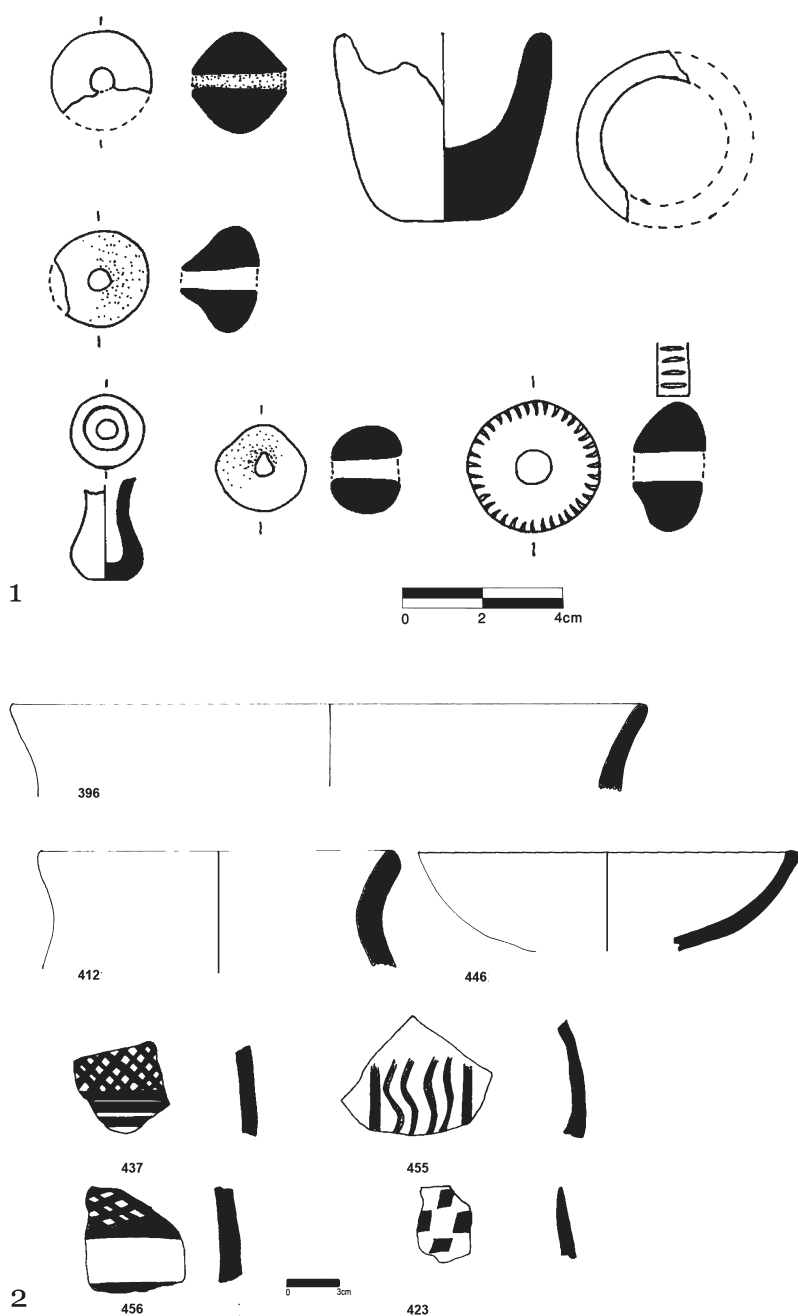


Fig. 7: 1 Period??? stone and clay objects; 2 Tepe Lavin Trench A, Period II pottery.

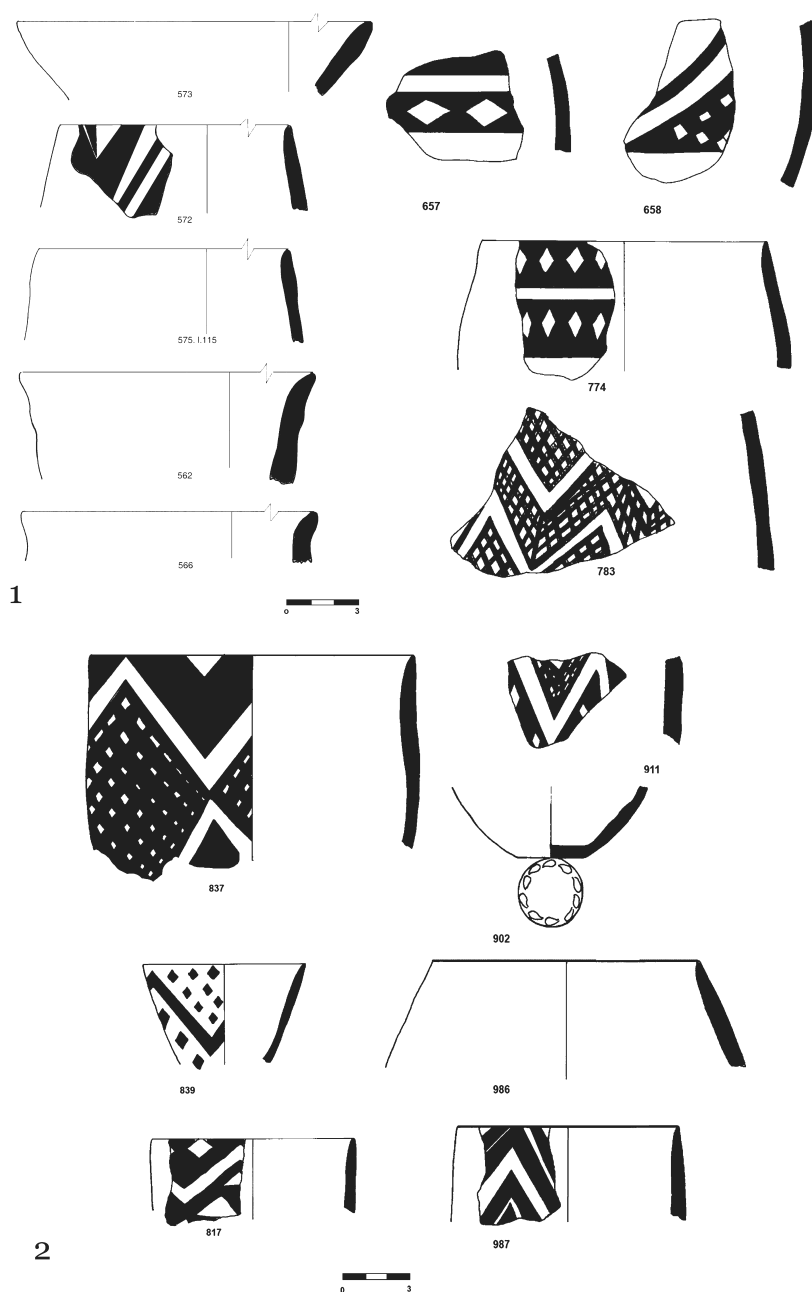


Fig. 8: 1 Tepe Lavin Trench A Period IIIa pottery; 2 Tepe Lavin Trench A, Period IIIb pottery.

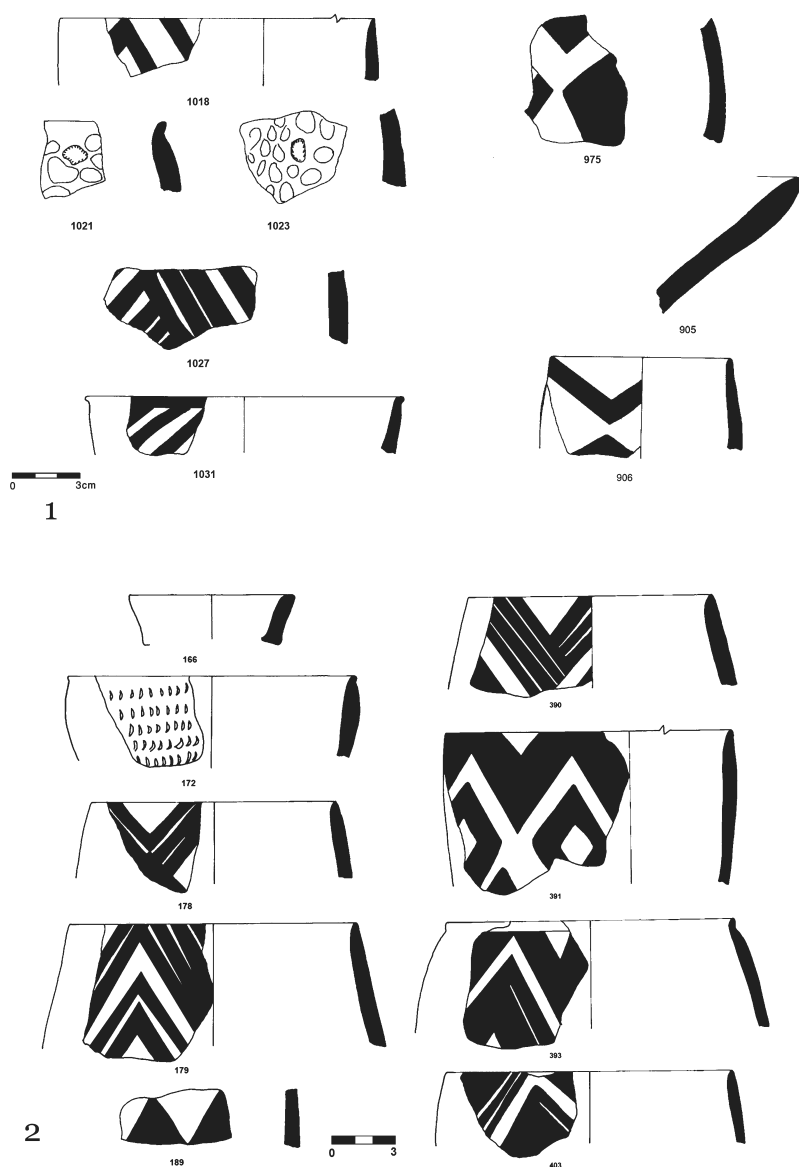


Fig. 9: 1 Tepe Lavin Trench A, Period IV pottery; 2 Tepe Lavin Trench B, Period V pottery.

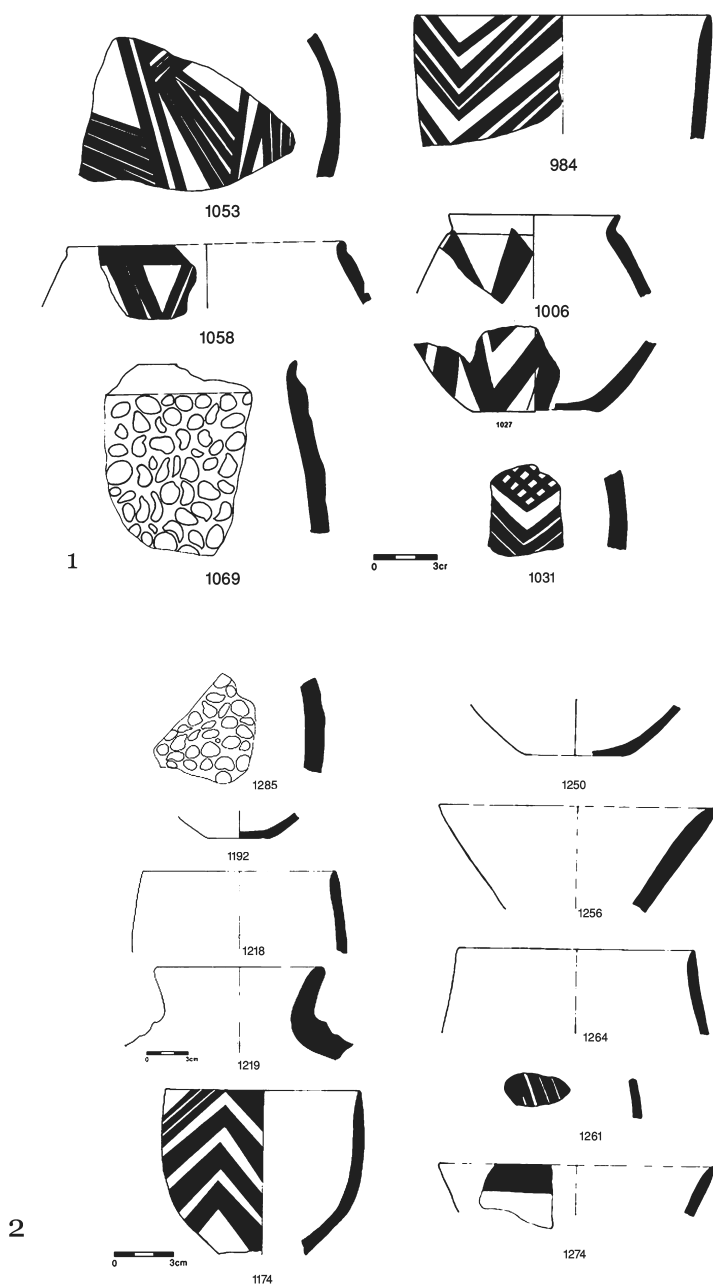


Fig. 10: 1 Tepe Lavin Trench B, Period VI pottery; 2 Tepe Lavin Trench B, Period VII pottery.

The 'International Style': Colour and Polychrome Faience

Andrea SINCLAIR

Classics and Archaeology
School of Historical and Philosophical Studies
The University of Melbourne
Victoria 3010
AUSTRALIA
E-mail: andrea_sinclair9@hotmail.com

Abstract

*The 'International Style' is an artistic style replete on small luxury artefacts found in elite contexts from the Late Bronze Age eastern Mediterranean. This visual idiom has been identified by the cohesive fusion of specific hybrid iconographic motifs and themes sourced from the polities of the eastern Mediterranean region. Previous scholarship on this subject has focussed on the characteristic visual idiom, value of exotic materials employed and issues of agency and recipient. This examination proposes to introduce the context of colour value in an assessment of this style and examines those ostensibly 'International Style' objects which employ colour in their decoration, polychrome vessels and tiles in faience from Cyprus, Egypt, the Aegean and the Levant.**

The discussion of issues of iconographic transference from the regions of the Late Bronze Age eastern Mediterranean and greater Near East is an area fraught with ambiguities and pitfalls. This circumstance has come about largely as a result of contemporary scholarship's increasing awareness of the heightened socio-political interaction occurring between the polities of the region.¹ It is currently acknowledged that this period of political parleying

* I wish to thank sincerely my supervisors, Associate Professor Louise Hitchcock and Professor Antonio Sagona for their mentoring throughout my research. My gratitude is also extended to Dr Maria Hadjicosti from the Cypriot Department of Antiquities, Dr Robert Steven Bianchi, and Professor Edgar Peltenburg, without whose assistance this project may not have come to fruition.

¹ Liverani 1990, 2008; Zaccagnini 1987; Sherratt and Sherratt 1991.

and reciprocal exchange of both luxury commodities and essential ingredients for technology, such as copper and tin for the production of bronze, facilitated the appearance in visual media of a hybrid iconographic style equally constructed in the prestigious materials circulating between the powerful states. This 'International Style' is argued to represent an elite aesthetic broadcasting membership in an exclusive 'club' of powers and fusing the visual styles of the cultures of the region.²

This paper proposes to address a less scrutinised aspect of visual culture for this iconographic style. It examines the significance of colour in the visual idiom of the luxury commodities flowing between the elites and courts of the ancient Near East. In this respect, specific emphasis has been placed on the employment of colour in the decoration of vitreous materials, particularly faience artefacts, such as vessels and architectural tiles from elite funerary contexts and palaces. Before addressing the issue of colour use and semantics in the context of the Late Bronze Age eastern Mediterranean, however, it shall be necessary to outline the nature of the media under examination, vitreous materials, and subsequently to clarify the criteria for recognition of the 'International Style' itself.

Faience

The vitreous material faience is a precursor to the more ubiquitous glass and is composed, like glass, predominantly of silicates, like sand or finely ground quartzes. In addition to this primary mineral matrix, the phosphates natron or plant ash were added with soda and lime, which under furnace conditions caused the fusion of the core into a solid material which naturally exhibited a lustrous glossy glaze.³

Faience glazes were potentially coloured with a variety of mineral pigments and it has been proposed that the same mineral element could create a range of hues, depending on the method of application, the composition, oxidation state and kiln atmosphere under firing conditions.⁴ Each factor contributed to the production of a wide range of subtle tints. In the

² Smith 1965; Schachermeyr 1967; Crowley 1989; Peltenburg 1991; Caubet 1998; Liverani 2000; Feldman 2006; Aruz 2008.

³ Kaczmarczyk and Hedges 1983, p. 6; Peltenburg 1987, p. 5; Tite and Bimson 1987, pp. 81–82; Nicholson 1993, p. 9, 1998, p. 50; Nicholson and Peltenburg 2000, p. 177; Bouquillon et al. 2005, pp. 13, 17; Vandiver 1983, pp. 22–24, 2008, pp. 37–43.

⁴ Kaczmarczyk and Hedges 1983, p. 140; Rehder 2000, p. 35.

Bronze Age eastern Mediterranean the predominant mineral pigment employed for faience was copper-oxide, producing an attractive green-blue glaze. This glaze could then be decorated with a dark brown-black pigment derived from manganese. Because of the nature of the fabric and the manufacture process, faience was employed to produce small objects, such as beads, amulets, vessels, figurines, inlays for jewellery and furniture, architectural tiles and small vessels.⁵ The formation of more elaborate objects,⁶ such as the Cypriot vessels under discussion in this study, required the use of two part moulds, hand turning, multiple segments and multiple firings.

In the Late Bronze Age vitreous technology reached a creative apogee for the entire region and thus the range of colours produced for faience equally was unsurpassed in sophistication and technical expertise.⁷ It was in this period that the colours employed in faience manufacture expanded dramatically. Cobalt blue was used to produce vivid blues through to violets and greys. Lead-antimonate yellow was introduced to produce an opaque yellow and green. In addition, pure white from unadulterated quartz, subtle shadings of pink, purple and grey appeared⁸ Faience cores were enhanced and hardened with the introduction of glasses and glassy frits. Purer, more saturated colours for body glazes were made possible through applying a preliminary fine white quartz layer to a faience core before the final glaze was applied.⁹

At a practical level, archaeological evidence for the production of vitreous technologies in this period reflects the same elite monopoly as it has in the past for metallurgy. From Egypt, Syro-Palestine and the Aegean we have evidence for faience and glass production occurring in direct relation to elite palatial and temple sites.¹⁰ Vitreous technologies, particularly those related to glasses and the mineral colourant cobalt, were elite technologies associated physically and metaphorically with royal prerogative and cult throughout the entire region.

⁵ Particularly in the Early and Middle Bronze Ages where small amulets and beads were ubiquitous to funerary and temple assemblages (Patch 1998, p. 32).

⁶ Not large objects by comparison to lithic and ceramic forms.

⁷ Vandiver 1983, 108–109; Caubet 2008, 420; Kaczmarczyk and Vandiver 2008, 59; Bouquillon et al. 2008, 94.

⁸ Vandiver 1983, pp. 108–9; Kaczmarczyk and Vandiver 2008, pp. 59–60.

⁹ An Egyptian innovation (Peltenburg 1985, p. 189).

¹⁰ Nicholson 2007, pp. 22–23, 2008, pp. 2–7; Bouquillon et al. 2008, p. 94; Hughes–Brock 2008, p. 136; Panagiotaki 2008, p. 47.

The Value of Vitreous Materials

In Egyptian texts faience is referred to as *tjenenet* or *tjehnet*, which is a noun cognate with 'luminosity', 'scintillation' and 'brilliance'.¹¹ It was an epithet borne by both 18th Dynasty rulers and by the gods.¹² *Tjehnet* was likened to the luminous qualities of the sun and moon and to the minerals gold and silver.¹³ It was not a quotidian material, and was employed in the main for cult and funerary objects, most frequently for the construction of funerary amulets and figurines, for, as a component of its solar association, it was connected symbolically with regeneration and rebirth.

In the broader Near East values for synthetic lithic materials were consistent with the Egyptian. The Hittite word *zákku-(wa)-nnan/na⁴kuuanna(n)*¹⁴ designated a variety of dark blue materials, including beads, ornaments, precious stones and copper.¹⁵ This term was cognate with the Ugaritic *iqni*, the Akkadian *uqnû* and the Sumerian ZA.GÎN.¹⁶ All three noun forms stemmed from a Mesopotamian '*Kulturwort*' for lapis lazuli, but were equally applied to synthetic materials, for example: '*uqnû kûrî*', 'ZA.GÎN. GIR₄' lapis of the kiln'.¹⁷

The glossy lustrous qualities made faience a suitable alternative to precious stones such as lapis lazuli and turquoise, but this does not infer a deflated value for the material. The fact that it was employed in juxtaposition with highly valued materials, such as semi-precious stones, gold, electrum and silver, decies this assumption.¹⁸ Glasses, frits and faience thus bore the value and lustrous qualities of the precious minerals which were essential elements in the construction of elite identity in the Late Bronze Age. They could be employed in conspicuous display for jewellery, votive weaponry, furniture and architecture. Finally the process of vitreous manu-

¹¹ Nicholson 1998, p. 55; Bianchi 1998, p. 24; Caubet et al. 2005, p. 27; Kaczmarczyk and Vandiver 2008, p. 57.

¹² Friedman 1998, p. 20.

¹³ In the offering lists for the ritual performance of New Years rites, faience is carried separately in conjunction with pairings of gold with silver and lapis lazuli with turquoise (Friedman 1998, p. 20).

¹⁴ Friedrich 1952, p. 122; Muhly 1973, p. 176.

¹⁵ Hittite copper derived from azurite (Foster 1987, p. 11; Bennett 2008, p. 160) or calcium copper silicate, 'blue frit', (Halleux 1969, pp. 62–66).

¹⁶ Not *zákamûtu* (na⁴KU.AN) as some texts cite. na⁴KU.AN has been identified as meteoric iron, but is transcribed as 'metal from heaven' (Labat 1976, p. 211, n. 468; Borger 2004, p. 415, n. 745).

¹⁷ Landsberger 1967, pp. 150–152; Oppenheim 1970, p. 10; Foster 1979, p. 112; Moorey 1994, p. 85; Griffith 2005, p. 330.

¹⁸ Bianchi 1998, p. 14.

facture through furnace technology under the aegis of both temple and palace enhanced the end product's semantic value.

The International Style

Having established the value of faience in the Late Bronze Age and its connection to elite prerogative, it behoves us to turn briefly to address the 'International Style' as it is currently defined. Prestige objects bearing this visual idiom occur in the expected range of luxury materials known to be circulating between the courts of the period, such as ivory, gold, electrum, alabaster, silver, blackwood, ebony, precious stones, glass and naturally faience,¹⁹ and are found in archaeological contexts throughout the eastern Mediterranean. They come from Egypt,²⁰ the Levant,²¹ Cyprus²² and the Aegean²³ and are found among assemblages from elite funerary, palatial and cult contexts.

These objects may be recognised by their visual and material hybridism, encompassing their composition, the sophistication of technological artifice and primarily, for the (usually seamless) fusion of diverse visual motifs replete on their surfaces. This visual idiom manifests a limited repertoire of formal characteristics and individual subjects.²⁴ The characteristics which identify this are a mobility and naturalism of expression for animal figures in open, non-narrative compositions.²⁵ There is minimal use of a ground-line or any attempt at portraying depth. The central figural design is usually bordered by ornamental bands which may be continuous schemes of rosettes, wavy lines, petal ornament, pomegranates, guilloche and running spirals. The central imagery displays a visual hybridism and is a homogeneous fusion of representational styles from the Aegean, Egypt and the Near East (Fig. 1: 1–2).²⁶

¹⁹ Feldman 2006, pp. 115–128; Caubet 1998, p. 105–111.

²⁰ Thebes, Valley of the Kings, KV 62 (Tutankhamen) and KV 46 (Yuyu and Tuyu) and Tell Basta/Bubastis in the Delta (also possibly Malkata, Tell el Yehudiya and Qantir).

²¹ Ugarit, Tyre, Byblos, Lachish, Ekron, and Megiddo.

²² Kition, Enkomi and Paphos.

²³ Mycenae, Spata, Athens and Delos. Here I employ Feldman's (2006, pp. 31–55) group of 'notable examples.'

²⁴ Prey; bulls and caprids, and predators; lions, leopards, hunting dogs, griffins and sphinxes.

²⁵ Usually lending themselves to the spatial constraints of the media, such as inlay panels for furniture or military-hunt equipment.

²⁶ Feldman 2006, pp. 5, 23.

As with other objects situated within the 'International Style' the faience artefacts display features which confound identification through the fusion of hybrid forms and decoration. These features include Aegean ornamental elements²⁷ and vessel forms,²⁸ Egyptian floral motifs,²⁹ inlay and glazing techniques and northern Syrian visual conventions, such as antithetical figural designs. Three primary faience objects are the focus for this study: a vase, an amphora and a conical rhyton from the site of Kition in southern Cyprus. These three vessels rate precedence due to their unique decoration and relatively pristine condition.

The monochrome vase (Fig. 1: 3; 2: 1) manifests an overall glaze which would originally have been pale blue and is decorated with brown-black linear onglaze. There are two registers manifesting contiguous scenes, one of animal hunt, the other of animals flanking sacred voluted trees. Each register is framed by an ornamental border of wavy lines, papyrus and five point stars.³⁰ The polychrome amphora (Fig. 1: 4; 2: 2) was primarily glazed again in a pale blue decorated with darker lavender blue faience insets. The principal register bears a scene of blue caprids and birds flanking sacred voluted trees. This is framed by a frieze of brown running spirals and brown double wavy lines. The base is decorated with a large, opaque yellow and pale blue lotus blossom with radiating petals.³¹

Finally, the polychrome conical rhyton (Fig. 2: 3) depicts two contiguous scenes of red hunters and animals in flying gallop interspersed in flowering vegetation. The lowest register is decorated with vertically aligned yellow running spirals. These scenes are set into an overall background glaze of dark grey-blue.³² In addition to these three objects the discussion also compares eight fragmentary, ostensibly related, coloured faience vessels and tiles from Mycenae in Greece, Minet el Beida in Syria, Sinai, Tell el Yehudiyah, Malkata and Qantir in Egypt. Each object has been chosen due to the employment of related iconographic idiom, such as, animal attack or frolic scenes (caprids, lions or griffins) in vegetal settings with ornamental borders of rosettes or spirals.

²⁷ Torsional compositions, figures in running gallop, running spirals and pendant vegetation.

²⁸ Conical rhyton.

²⁹ Lotus, lily and papyrus.

³⁰ Caubet 1985, pp. 64–68; Yon and Caubet 1985, figs. 33, 38; Peltenburg 1985, p. 190.

³¹ Caubet and Peltenburg 1982, pp. 83–85; Caubet 1985, p. 71; Yon and Caubet 1985 figs. 33, 40; Peltenburg 1985, p. 191.

³² Karageorghis 1974, Vol. 2, pls. C, XCIV; Peltenburg 1974, pp. 116–126.

The Value of Colour

Understanding Colour

Before addressing the issue of colour and the perception of colour in antiquity, it is first necessary to establish clear definitions of the criteria for interpretation. It is important to be aware that with colour perception all such definitions are largely dependant on subjective parameters, but essential nonetheless to conveying conceptual arguments. Here I propose to begin with a brief introduction to the mechanics and history of colour theory, then through to regional analyses of colour values in antiquity, and finally to the colours employed in faience and vitreous material production.

Colour value may be defined and understood in multiple ways. Initially, it is understood as a purely mechanical process of the physical environment. That is, the result of light refraction and reflection from physical surfaces as recorded and interpreted by the ocular system. The retina of the human eye possesses thousands of receptors or 'cones' which are sensitive to light and colour and transfer the data they receive from an object viewed to the human brain.³³ Primates appear to have developed colour perception as a method of refined visual differentiation, evolved through the process of food gathering. Human colour vision appears subsequently to have developed from the necessity to distinguish ripening fruit from a background of variegated light and foliage. This skill is not just associated with colour differentiation but also entails the assessment of a dappled, variegated or unevenly lighted background.³⁴ Here the value of play of light and contrast is equivalent in force to hue.

It is from this point that ambiguity slips into a discussion of colour. The practical application of the physical processes is well understood, however the biological and subjective processes entailed in the perception of this same mechanical action are variable and manifold. In observing an object, the human brain is able to make a general assessment of shape, texture, reflectivity (gloss), colour and environmental illumination, and with this data is efficient at recognising both an object's nature and likely composition.³⁵ Assessments of colour equally must take account of the subjectivity of the viewer (and whether or not they have 'normative' vision) and then also the nature of environmental factors such as external illumination,

³³ Schafer and Maxwell 2000, p. 52.

³⁴ Mollon 2000, pp. 10, 24.

³⁵ Schafer and Maxwell 2000, p. 53.

material texture, surface reflection and even comparative cleanliness!³⁶ Equally, when observing colour images in scholarly publications the viewer must be aware of different chromatic values in the printer's ink, the choice of background, contrast and environmental illumination at the time. Understandably this is why references to colour value in archaeological literature can be widely divergent, maddeningly subjective and entirely ambiguous.

These obstacles notwithstanding, it is this author's conviction that a syncretic approach to the interpretation of an artefact can not exclude the colour values, particularly when the medium under examination is faience. In the theoretical evolution of modern colour classifications the hallmark references are the theories of two early 20th century scholars, Munsell³⁷ and Ostwald.³⁸ Their systems rested upon a three tiered classification of colour encompassing primarily an achromatic or 'greyscale' of levels of brightness, ranging from white through gray to black. Secondly, a circular hue scale of tonal colours graded according to their similarity or dissimilarity (opposite and complementary hues: blue contra orange). Finally, they are measured according to relative purity of hue. That is, the degree of similarity and contrast and labelled saturation.³⁹ For convenience I shall call these three categories, brightness, hue and saturation.⁴⁰

When examining the evidence for an understanding or concept of colour in antiquity, it is necessary to step aside from contemporary hue drenched perceptions of colour. That is, the visual design 'colour chart' of colour imbued shades and hues which permeate contemporary media and to consider colour in terms of a natural environment. In the Bronze Age this was an environment wherein bold unsaturated hues would have been associated predominantly with natural phenomena such as the sea, minerals and flowering or fruiting vegetation. Beyond the natural environment, the only arena within which boldly unsaturated colours could have been viewed would have been within the ritual and display of elite palaces and temples. In these environs, bright colours and patterning would have been an outward symbol of opulence.

In examining non-Western pre-modern cultures we are faced with the dilemma of accurately defining abstract concepts, such as colour and hue.

³⁶ Schafer and Maxwell 2000, pp. 54–65.

³⁷ Munsell 1975.

³⁸ Ostwald and Jacobsen 1948.

³⁹ Munsell referred to this scale as chroma and compared it to the greyscale. Ostwald measured this through degrees of whiteness (tint) greyness (tone) or blackness (shades).

⁴⁰ Wurmfeld 2000, pp. 32.

In antiquity, perceptions of aesthetic value for coloured material such as semi-precious stones and faience were dependent on different criteria,⁴¹ they were valued for ‘fitness for the purpose intended’, creation of ‘awe and wonder in the spectator’, but most importantly, high cultural value was placed on objects constructed employing ‘light’, ‘radiance’, ‘luminosity’⁴² and exhibiting ‘ornamentation’.⁴³

In order to undertake an examination of colour in antiquity, it is essential for us to return to philology and briefly tackle linguistic approaches to colour theory. The model for the development of colour terms developed by Berlin and Kay in the early 1970s still looms over all discussion of colour theory today.⁴⁴ This argued that languages gradually evolve a lexicon of terms for colour in a fairly rigid sequence of seven stages: from ‘black’ and ‘white’ (Stage I), to ‘red’ (II), to ‘green’, then ‘yellow’ or ‘yellow’ followed by ‘green’ (III and IV), to ‘blue’ (V), to ‘brown’ (VI), followed finally by the shades ‘pink’, ‘purple’, ‘orange’ and ‘grey’ (VII). This sequence is argued to develop in conjunction with social complexity in any culture, because ‘the encoding of perceptual categories into basic colour terms follows a fixed partial order’.⁴⁵

I	II	III	IV	V	VI	VII
black	red	green	yellow	blue	brown	pink/grey
white		yellow	green			purple/orange

However, as with aesthetic responses, contemporary parameters for colour classifications are not relevant to the assessment of perception of colour in antiquity or for that matter, for non-Western cultures. It is ill advised to assume that colour was understood as discrete units which graduate in subtle gradations into each other, as with the contemporary colour models and spectra.⁴⁶ These concepts evolved out of studies of pigments and ocular perception and involve a level of technological sophistication and experimentation which is irrelevant to the study of colour values in the ancient world.

Assessments such as those by Berlin and Kay, therefore, should be used as guidelines to scholarship, not hard and fast rules, as they do not take into

⁴¹ Winter 2002.

⁴² In Mesopotamia: *namru*/ZALAG₂ was the ideogram for light and employed as an intensifier for colours (Landsberger 1967, p. 145) in Egypt *tjenenet*–faience.

⁴³ *burrumu*/DAR in Mesopotamia covered the semantic range of ‘coloured’, ‘inlay’, and ‘ornament’ (Labat 1976, p. 91, n. 114; Borger 2004, p. 293, n. 183).

account conceptual vagaries in interpretation, such as the clearly profound value placed upon the quality of light or visual resonance in an appreciation of colour. Equally, modern evaluations neglect the high value placed upon patterning and ornament. These were not perceived as isolated individual colours but as a colour term in itself. This is a concept which is entirely alien to the contemporary audience, and therefore has received little scrutiny in scholarship.

Colour Symbolism and Polysemy in the Late Bronze Age

The academic study of colour significance in antiquity is a discipline which is still evolving. Textual evidence for the ideological and ritual significance of colour use is meagre for Egypt, somewhat less for the Near East and even more limited for the Aegean, where the residual written evidence is limited to administrative texts. However, it is possible for scholars to postulate certain values for colour and the relationship of material to colour. My discussion in this chapter entails examining both the textual and material evidence for colour values in the eastern Mediterranean and begins with Egypt.

The Egyptian colour palette appears on linguistic grounds to have been limited to five core terms for colour values, attested from as early as the 3rd millennium BCE. These terms were: ⁴⁷

White	<i>bd</i>
Black	<i>km</i>
Red	<i>dšr</i>
Green/Grue ⁴⁷	<i>w3d</i>
Multicoloured ⁴⁸	<i>s3b</i> ⁴⁹

This is compatible with the Berlin and Kaye model Stage III. No other terms existed for shades or hues, although it is probable that descriptive and comparative terms functioned adequately alongside core colour terms. In application, the Egyptian vocabulary was capable of employing colours

⁴⁴ With some modifications by later research, see Baines (1985a, p. 282).

⁴⁵ Berlin and Kay 1999, pp. 4–5, 104.

⁴⁶ Wurmfeld 2000, pp. 31–32; Kuehni and Schwartz 2008, p. 93.

⁴⁷ 'green-blue'.

⁴⁸ A term used to describe the skins of animals and feathering of birds.

⁴⁹ Baines 1985a, p. 283; Schenkel 1963; Robins 2001, p. 291.

from the natural environment in the pursuit of descriptive veracity, thus the sky could be described as lapis lazuli *'hsbd'* or turquoise *'mfk3t'*.⁵⁰ This terminology, however, does not account for the functional range of colours employed in visual design for the entire Egyptian historical period. Blue and yellow appear to be absent from the lexicon of base colour terms, yet they occur in the wider context of comparative terminology for objects, materials and livestock.

With the advent of a broader range of pigment colours in the New Kingdom, the lexical vocabulary did not similarly expand, and *w3d* is believed to encompass all possible variants of blue-green, including the colours violet and indigo. Such an incongruity may appear baffling to the modern spectator, but if these words embrace a more abstract notion, possibly based on intensity and contrast, rather than a specific hue or tone, their value makes a modicum of sense.⁵¹ In this instance, the interpretation of the base term 'red' would encompass the entire range of warm hues, and thus entail the range of shades from red-brown through red to orange, and lastly even yellow. Green, in juxtaposition, would encompass the range of 'cool' colours and cover greens to aquamarines and blues, and thus to purples and indigos.⁵²

Here then the value of colour is not directly associated with hue, but rather with tonal qualities. As with iconography, the Egyptian colour lexicon appears to have not been concerned with naturalistic veracity but rather with the importance of legibility of meaning.⁵³ The application of colour in visual design was therefore formulaic and clearly structured. Colours were employed in with the same methodical regime as for the visual idiom; they were used as a tool to indicate the specific class and value of an object.

The Early Dynastic period in Egypt saw the foundation of the Egyptian state as it was to remain for over three thousand years and with this came the adherence to a rigid visual repertoire. This canon functioned as a medium for the expression of state ideology. All Egyptian state sanctioned imagery reinforced this value of unity through balanced opposing forces, order (*Maat*) over chaos (*Isfet*), masculine with feminine, earth with sky, fertility (the Nile basin) over sterility (the desert).⁵⁴ Colours conveyed the same strictly encoded messages regarding the unity of opposites as the images themselves did.

⁵⁰ Warburton 2004, p. 128.

⁵¹ Warburton 2004, pp. 128–129.

⁵² Baines 1985a, pp. 285–286.

⁵³ Baines 1985a, p. 284, 1985b, p. 139.

⁵⁴ Robins 1997, pp. 17–18; Kemp 1978, p. 11; Eaverly 2004, p. 53; Davis 1989, pp. 64–65.

With respect to colour, this duality was expressed through the dark and light renderings for skin tones in human males (dark red-brown) and females (ochre-yellow, white or pink).⁵⁵ A colour convention perhaps reflected in the choice of red insets for the hunter figures of the rhyton. The symbols of Egyptian unification were the white crown of Upper Egypt and the red crown of Lower Egypt. These were worn as a composite crown by the ruler as a display of his function as conveyer of universal order. The fertile Nile floodplain of Egypt was the 'Black Land,' the sterile desert was the 'Red Land.' Black held contexts of night, fertility and regeneration, the underworld god Osiris was 'the black one'.⁵⁶ The colour red-yellow held a plurality of semantic values, signifying both beneficent solar and malignant typhonic forces.⁵⁷ It could be employed for fecundity figures⁵⁸ and yet was the colour of the leonine solar goddess Sekhmet in both her nurturing and scorching aspects.⁵⁹ As a consequence of its negative connotations, it was only employed for the writing of limited hieroglyphic inscriptions.⁶⁰

In the representation of deities, particularly in descriptions of statuary, the very bones of the gods are described as silver, their flesh gold⁶¹ and their hair lapis lazuli.⁶² This threefold combination may reflect the unified cosmic nature of divinity, with the lithic materials symbolically referencing the sun/masculine and moon/feminine dichotomy, and lapis lazuli the heavenly firmament through which they travel. Regardless, this conscious choice of minerals specifically reflects the precious materials considered fitting for the incarnation of deities when they resided in their cult statues.⁶³

In isolation, colours could convey different messages. White was symbolic of purity, sacredness, the mineral silver and the moon.⁶⁴ The colour

⁵⁵ Figures of foreigners as forces of chaos were not required to conform to local canons. Also this strict male-female dichotomy was loosened during the late 18th Dynasty Amarna Period, but only for members of the royal family, who were depicted with the red-brown tones of the masculine force, both male and female. This break in convention has been argued as representative of an ideological shift through the institution of the worship of the solar deity, the Aten (Eaverly 2004, pp. 53–5).

⁵⁶ Robins 1997, p. 14, 2001, p. 291.

⁵⁷ Ragai 1986, p. 74; Hodel-Hoenes 2000, p. 20; Robins 2001, p. 292.

⁵⁸ Baines 1985b, p. 142.

⁵⁹ Bianchi 1998, p. 22.

⁶⁰ Black was the preferred colour for texts.

⁶¹ A description of the sun god Ra from 'The Destruction of Mankind', where he employs the goddess Hathor in her destructive aspect, the goddess Sekhmet, to annihilate humankind (Lichtheim 1976, pp. 198–199; Lewis 2005, p. 83).

⁶² Here lapis is conflating with black, blue hair for both gods and rulers was a visual convention from New Kingdom Egypt (Griffith 2005).

⁶³ Robins 2005, pp. 1–6; Lewis 2005, p. 83.

⁶⁴ Robins 2001, p. 291; Ragai 1986, p. 75.

green was employed for malachite and invoked notions of fertility and regeneration, the word itself being cognate with 'fresh' and the papyrus stalk.⁶⁵ Deities of fecundity like Osiris and Min could be depicted in visual media with green flesh, but certain gods could also be blue fleshed, the Theban god Amen-Ra, Nile gods and the goddess Hathor.⁶⁶ The Mediterranean was the *w3d-wr*, 'Great Green,' a title which also had resonance in the Egyptian use of the colour for deities of fertility, regeneration and rebirth. Where these terms become problematic however, is the notion of green as distinct from blue, particularly with regard to faience glazes, where copper oxide blue-green conflates with what a modern audience would perceive as separate hues. The association of fertility and regeneration with the colour green extends out to include the colour blue, and thus lustrous turquoise and faience glazes were deemed appropriate for objects associated with the goddess Hathor in her regenerative capacity. In the Egyptian colour lexicon, lapis lazuli (*hsbd*) appears to have been the epithet applied to blue or dark blue materials in differentiation from green.⁶⁷

The colour blue has fuelled debate from the perceived absence of a basic developmental stage in colour perception terminology. Why is Egyptian lacking a core term for the colour blue, or indeed, was it? Some have argued for the conflation of the term green to include the colour blue,⁶⁸ others for the existence of a separate term.⁶⁹ Whichever solution is correct, if indeed such a concept is valid to an assessment of values in antiquity, there is no question of the manifestation of the hue 'blue' in the Egyptian colour palette, both in pictorial imagery and the decorative arts. Most particularly for the period we are examining here, blue became the most prestigious colour and visually associated with luxury, status and elite display.⁷⁰

In the New Kingdom, blue took a quantitative leap into the visual plane of Egyptian imagery, the likes of which is not repeated again until the Ptolemaic Period. With the use of cobalt pigment, it stepped resoundingly from a conceptual and material unity to two discrete entities, one, of intense dark lapis lazuli blue and the other, of pale turquoise blue.⁷¹ In the late 18th Dynasty, dark blues were actively employed to decorate alabaster

⁶⁵ Baines 1985a, p. 284, 1985b, p. 142; Ragai 1986, p. 77; Robins 1997, p. 15, 2001, p. 291.

⁶⁶ Baines 1985b, p. 142; Robins 1997, p. 15; Wilkinson 2008, p. 4.

⁶⁷ Baines 1985a, p. 286.

⁶⁸ Baines 1985a; Schenkel 1963.

⁶⁹ Warburton 2004, p. 128.

⁷⁰ Baines 1985a, p. 287, 1985b, pp. 141–142.

⁷¹ This is achieved visually by the use of vitreous materials for both shades or lapis lazuli for dark blue, and turquoise or feldspar (less common) for light blue. It should also be noted that these minerals can manifest a range of colour values depending on source and quality.

vases, ceramics and vitreous materials, replacing the previously dominant use of iron red and manganese black linear detail.⁷² Lighter turquoise blues compliment lapis lazuli and cobalt faiences in inlays in elite jewellery, weaponry and furniture. This juxtapositioning of colour was most frequently employed in combination with red minerals.⁷³

There is no question that the combination of red, dark blue and light blue held specific semantic value. Many commentators have argued, with complete validity, for the binary nature of Egyptian imagery,⁷⁴ but if one looks at funerary assemblages, particularly objects from the decorative arts, the outstanding colour application is of black, white and red or dark blue, light blue and red.⁷⁵ A tri-colour system presumably fusing three symbolic elements, 'dark,' 'light' and 'heat,' most commonly in combination with gold, the solar symbol, again a warm hue aligned to red.⁷⁶ Is it possible that this repeated motif was an iconographic mapping out of the three-part nature of the Egyptian cosmos, through which the sun god⁷⁷ must pass each day?

In monumental temple architecture there is a direct correlation between the use of mineral elements and the visible manifestation of the mineral composition of the earth. Such ornamentation symbolically represents the temple as the primeval mound within which creation was engendered, and the plethora of mineral elements, the elements fundamental to creation.⁷⁸ This is complimented by the conscious employment of the colours black, white and red in the decoration of temple and mortuary complexes. The colour scheme was again this tripartite combination, which reflects visually the unity of the state and the cosmos. Here then, it may also be argued that the use of faience for architectural tiles, particularly in the 18th and 19th Dynasties, was a conscious element in this notion of universal harmony.

In the Near East, the linguistic employment of colour terms reflects that of Egypt, but in no way can be ascribed to an Egyptian influence or vice versa. In Mesopotamia, both Sumerian and Akkadian textual evidence is limited to five basic colour terms. These too match the Berlin and Kaye model Stage III.

⁷² Hope 2001, pp. 24, 43.

⁷³ Carnelian, jasper, faience, glass paste or red gold (Robins 1997, p. 15).

⁷⁴ Eaverly 2004; Baines 1985a; Robins 1997.

⁷⁵ Robins 2001, p. 292.

⁷⁶ Interestingly, this tripartite combination employs the earliest Berlin and Kaye model stage II.

⁷⁷ And indeed the deceased regenerated as the solar deity.

	Sumerian	Akkadian
Black	GI ₆ /GE ₆	<i>šalmu</i>
White	BABBAR	<i>pešu</i>
Red-brown	SU ₄ /SA ₄	<i>sāmu</i>
Green-yellow	SIG ₇	<i>warqu/urqu</i>
Multicoloured	UGUN/DAR	<i>burrumu</i>

The latter term *burrumu*, cognate with ‘inlay’ and ‘intricate’, was an epithet of the goddess Ištar, but also conflated with red and is represented by the ideogram for a bulls horn.⁷⁹ *šalmu* was inauspicious, cognate with ‘image,’ ‘statue’ and ‘night’ and embraced all subtleties relating to sombre, shadow and dark hues, grey, blue through to black⁸⁰ *urqu* and *sāmu* both functioned as similes for ‘brilliant,’ ‘radiant’ or ‘luminescent,’ with *urqu* cognate with ‘plant’ or ‘vegetation’ and equated with the precious mineral gold. *sāmu* was auspicious, averted hostile forces and a colour specifically associated with the features of gods. *pešu* was an epithet of the sun god Šamaš, the noun for ‘day’ and was derived from the term for ‘light’ or ‘bright,’ as the sun is bright. The ideogram derived from an image of the rising sun. As *urqu* was symbolically equated with gold, *pešu* was equated with silver.⁸¹ In this lexical context, in Mesopotamia, as with Egypt, it is interesting to note that there was no core term for the notion of blue, and yellow was conflated with green.⁸²

Beyond these base terms, which were applied to describe the hues of precious stones, dyed textiles, animal hides or physical features of the human body, Mesopotamian literature employed comparative description to express notions of colour and most importantly adjectives of intensification, particularly for shades of red. Thus there were terms for intense red, dark red, bright red and burning red, also radiant, shining, matt and dull.⁸³

Precious stones were rarely named for their colour, except carnelian, and lapis lazuli again appears to have been the commonest descriptive epithet for objects of blue, dark blue or black. Texts referring to blue wools commonly employ the prefix ZA.GÌN (lapis lazuli) to describe varying shades of materials such as threads and fabrics.⁸⁴ In literature the three heavens

⁷⁸ Bianchi 1998, p. 26.

⁷⁹ Unger 1971, p. 24; for the lexical citations see Labat (1976) and Borger (2004).

⁸⁰ Unger 1971, p. 25.

⁸¹ Unger 1971, p. 25.

⁸² Landsberger 1967, pp. 139–140.

⁸³ Landsberger 1967, pp. 146–147.

⁸⁴ Preceded by the determinative for wool, SÍG (Labat 1976, p. 225, n. 539), blue wool was also considered efficacious in healing rituals (Oppenheim 1970, p. 12).

were described as constructed of precious stones, the uppermost, belonging to the god Anu, was red carnelian. Also the throne of the gods was composed of lapis lazuli and lit with red amber.⁸⁵

With respect to the visual repertoire, images in the form of wall paintings are rare, so material evidence depends more on the plastic and the decorative arts. In the decoration of jewellery, the colours black (bitumen), white (limestone, shell or ivory), red (carnelian) and blue (lapis lazuli) dominated. These were juxtaposed within matrices of gold, silver or electrum. Thus, the dominant combination was again the pairing of red and blue or black. This dichotomy has been argued as symbolic of fertility and the dual nature of the universe, masculine balanced with feminine, divine sphere with human and elite power as mediator between the two worlds.⁸⁶ It was also likely to function as a metonym for the divine pairing of the goddess Ištar and her consort Dumuzi, wherein the goddess is inferred by the colour red and the shepherd god, the blue.⁸⁷ This rationale is augmented by the war goddess bearing the epithet *mùš-me-huš*, 'she of the red face,' a title reflective of her astral nature as goddess of the morning and evening star, the planet Venus.⁸⁸

The most cogent values for colours, and for that matter, minerals, were again the tonal qualities of light and translucency. In Mesopotamia, the radiant or luminous qualities of an artefact reflected its spiritual and aesthetic value. Luminous colours were synonymous with the presence of divinity; they manifested sensations of piety, beauty and perfection.⁸⁹ Therefore, the perception of colour is again strongly influenced by notions of tonal resonance not applicable to contemporary discussions of colour, but very suitable to a discussion of the value of lustrous faience and other vitreous materials.

The Levant and Cyprus present a more problematic area for discussion, as in the past they have been dismissed as reflective of the visual styles of Egypt and Mesopotamia, and thus not to manifest a specific symbolic vocabulary. This is an issue which is difficult to refute on the basis of current visual evidence. The influence of the greater states of the eastern Mediterranean littoral cannot be overlooked, particularly in the context of the internationalism of the Late Bronze Age, but it would be naive to assume

⁸⁵ Landsberger 1967, p. 154; Rochberg 2009, p. 66.

⁸⁶ Winter 1999, p. 52; Barrett 2007, pp. 26–27.

⁸⁷ And perhaps equally directly referenced the goddess's androgynous nature, as her figure is traditionally adorned with blue lapis jewellery (Groneberg 1986; Barrett 2007, p. 27).

⁸⁸ Barrett 2007, pp. 25–26.

⁸⁹ Winter 2002, p. 13; Rochberg 2009, p. 50.

there were no local visual traditions.⁹⁰ However, this may be more applicable to quotidian production rather than the prestige materials and artefacts we examine here. It has been suggested however, that in the Levant (Israel) red was employed to indicate the sacredness of an object or building. In Anatolia the combination of red, blue and yellow may have served a similar function.⁹¹

In the Aegean, the association of linguistic terminology to values for colour is quantitatively harder to pin down, but on the basis of the limited archival evidence certain conclusions may be drawn. Unlike the previously discussed cultures, Mycenaean Linear B texts appear to have a vocabulary that included the colour blue. However, the attestation of blue or for that matter any colour term existing in Mycenaean culture should be qualified by the fact that the evidence for colour terms in the Late Bronze Age are dependant on administrative texts.⁹² Therefore, examples are limited to descriptions of commodities, textile colours and dyes, the hides of livestock and palace inventories of worked goods and raw materials.⁹³ This does not guarantee a core lexical function for a colour term, nor does it exclude the likelihood that any given term does not name a material, mineral pigment or a production technique, rather than a colour term.⁹⁴

It is impossible, therefore, to apply the Berlin and Kay model with any confidence. For in doing so one arrives at a too simplistic stage of development. Within these parameters, there were at least thirty-nine terms for colours in the Linear B documents.⁹⁵ Equally, these texts also possessed a term associated with 'ornamented,' 'patterning,' 'variegated' or 'dappled,' *po-ki-ro*, equivalent to the Classical period term, *ποικίλος* (*poikilos*).⁹⁶ These terms do not appear to describe hues, rather they favour nuances of saturation and brightness.⁹⁷ Of the thirty nine terms, nineteen refer to aspects of brightness/light and somberness/dark. Next in precedence are shades of red-purple, then there are two tones for yellow and two for blue, each a lighter and a darker shade.⁹⁸ Astonishingly there is no extant lexical term

⁹⁰ Webb 1999.

⁹¹ Zevit 2001, p. 272.

⁹² Monroe 2009, p. 196.

⁹³ Nosch 2004, p. 32; Gillis 2004, p. 58.

⁹⁴ Gillis 2004, p. 58.

⁹⁵ Blackolmer 2004, p. 64.

⁹⁶ Blackolmer 2004, p. 64.

⁹⁷ Gillis 2004, pp. 58–59.

⁹⁸ The identification of *κυανός* and *γλαυκός* with dark and light blue is debated in scholarship and is best understood as shades of lightness and darkness or intensity, and not of hue (Clarke 2004, pp. 131–9).

for green.⁹⁹ This evidence supports certain conclusions regarding the perception of colour in the Aegean. Emphasis, yet again, resided in the value of brightness and saturation over hue.

With respect to the visual repertoire, an examination of Aegean approaches to colour values must first look to Middle Bronze Age Crete for inspiration. In Minoan fresco representation specific colours were favoured at different periods. Other colours were equally under-represented. For the MM IB-IIA at the palace of Knossos the range of colours employed was broad, with nine colour categories identified, the most common being black, white, red and yellow. In the transition to the MM II, the colour palette expanded, but the actual range of colours employed reduced to seven. There was a dramatic increase in the use of blue, which replaced yellow in precedence. As we have already seen for the wider region, the dominant colours favoured were white, red and blue. Yellow and green were in the minority, purple was virtually absent.¹⁰⁰ These changes cannot be ascribed to scarcity of pigments, but rather to the conscious manipulation of the colour palette.¹⁰¹

In pottery, colour schemes were dominated again by the chromatic grouping of black, white and red, most exemplified by the 'light on dark' Kamares Style of the Middle Minoan period and never entirely abandoned in Aegean ceramic design in subsequent periods.¹⁰² This combination of light/white, red and dark/black has been identified as a specific Aegean visual design pattern convention which extended to the decoration of textiles as well.¹⁰³

In Minoan faience the adoption of polychrome techniques facilitated a wider colour palette, employing shades of brown, beige, green, turquoise, red and yellow.¹⁰⁴ These however gave way to the colour blue in the Mycenaean period and vitreous technology in the form of glass or vitreous paste, inlays, insets and relief beads. By the end of the period under discussion, dark blue vitreous inlays and beads were a Mycenaean elite phenomenon, associated in particular with funerary contexts and palace displays of prestige.¹⁰⁵ They were often intentionally juxtaposed in design with the mineral

⁹⁹ Blackolmer 2004, p. 64.

¹⁰⁰ Peters 2008, pp. 192–195.

¹⁰¹ Gillis 2004, pp. 57–58.

¹⁰² Blackolmer 2004, p. 62.

¹⁰³ A '*Farbentroika*' (Gillis 2004, p. 36).

¹⁰⁴ Foster 1987a, p. 61.

¹⁰⁵ The majority are dark blue with a lesser proportion of pale blue, any glass paste not conforming to these pigment colours has been found to be corroded of the original glaze (Nightingale 2008, p. 64; Hughes–Brock 2008, pp. 132, 135).

gold.¹⁰⁶ In the Aegean, yet again, blue was specifically associated with elite prerogative and was commonly juxtaposed with precious minerals.

Colour and the 'International Style' Faience

In addressing the relationship between colour use and objects in the 'International Style' one is constrained by the meagre repertoire of acknowledged artefacts in this iconographic style. The majority of artefacts are incised ivory and precious metal plaques, and therefore monochrome in isolation. However, many of these were components and inlays from larger composite objects of furniture and chariotry. Subsequently, the final assembled object would have manifested a range of textures and colours, combining luxury materials in an extravagant display of wealth.

Individual objects from the repertoire represent a much more telling example of the juxtapositioning of coloured materials. To cite one brief example, an inlaid red wood chest from the treasure of Tutankhamen is veneered and gilded and combines coloured inlays of ivory, black ebony, cream calcite, red and blue faience and glass paste.¹⁰⁷ The iconography manifests Egyptian scenes of the young ruler and his wife participating in recreational hunting activities¹⁰⁸ and on two faces, scenes from the 'International Style' repertoire of animal attack within lush foliage. It is impossible for the analyst in this instance to separate the values for colour from the symbolic resonance of the precious materials involved in the manufacture of such an object. Nor is it possible to separate Amarna period Egyptian visual ideology from that of the 'International Style'.

However, it is the employment of colour as carefully positioned overlays which makes this object such a visually splendid artefact. The predominant colours employed being cream, red and black, with lesser values of blue and white. An object such as this broadcasts technical excellence and the close relationship between elite ideology and luxury commodities, incorporating the skills of woodworking, metallurgy, ivory sculpture and vitreous technology in one artefact.

Objects replete in the 'International Style' appear to be cramming as many prestige materials into as small a space as possible and to the modern eye could be perceived as manifestations of gratuitous wealth. However, what if the extravagant incorporation of materials, textures and colour has

¹⁰⁶ Nightingale 2008, p. 80.

¹⁰⁷ Hawass 2007, p. 177; Schorsch 2001, pp. 68–69.

¹⁰⁸ Canonical imagery reinforcing the notion of fitness to rule.

intrinsic semantic value? Visually these reflect a notion of lavish ornamentation and multi-colouring. The strategic positioning of the earth's wealth conveys an ideological message of the harmony of the universe through the juxtapositioning of natural elements. These objects do not just display elite control over materials and technology, but equally convey a fusion of the minerals contained in the earth and thus the elements essential to creation. Such power over natural elements would guarantee divine rejuvenation and therefore be essential to funerary and cult equipment.¹⁰⁹ Finally, these objects also fit snugly into a colour value primary to all cultures of the eastern Mediterranean, the multicoloured value, which appears to be intrinsic to the colour lexicon of each language.¹¹⁰

Faience vessels in the 'International Style' present an opportunity to address this same semantic value in the Late Bronze Age. If the application of colour in the decorative arts is not arbitrary, but rather is an essential element of the syncretic whole, then the colours manifested upon these 'International Style' faience vessels and inlays ought to reflect the foregoing discussions on colour values. Equally, yet again the colours employed appear to reference notions of regeneration and elite ideology, particularly associated with the presence of divinity and otherworldliness.

Of the faience artefacts under scrutiny here, the glaze colours represented are dominated by blue.¹¹¹ Both the body of the amphora and vase from Bamboula would have been a luminous turquoise blue, the rhyton from Kition may well have been a dark rich lapis lazuli blue in antiquity and has now faded (Fig. 1: 3–4). After blue, red (red-brown), pale yellow and white are well represented, with green and black-brown employed for linear detail. In combination, blue is paired predominantly with white or pale yellow and with red. It is challenging to consider that while blue has no apparent place in any colour lexicon, it dominates visual style in the Late Bronze Age. This may well be ascribable to the equation of the colour with the value of minerals, particularly lapis lazuli, which was the epithet most often used to convey a notion of this hue.

Blue exhibits considerable semantic resonance as a signifier of opulence. But not blue alone, blue juxtaposed with the colour red, and with white and most importantly, as a luminous vitreous glaze. The majority of the objects under discussion bear a glossy, and, in some cases, highly translucent, metallic gleaming glaze. This underpins their symbolic value and asso-

¹⁰⁹ Bianchi 1998, p. 26.

¹¹⁰ 'Burrutu', 's3b', 'ποικίλος'.

¹¹¹ Predominantly a grey-violet blue pigment derived from copper oxide but also some instances of cobalt blue, usually as vitreous insets.

ciates them visually and semantically with kingship, otherness and the divine in all cultures residing on the eastern Mediterranean littoral. Ubiquitous faience artefacts,¹¹² from the various regions in our study, occur in a more limited range of hues, in the main copper oxide blue-green. Equally they were decorated in a bichrome brown or black.

Faience vessels in the 'International Style' are, in contrast, noticeable for their juxtapositioning of bold colours and glossy luminous glazes. It is this author's conviction that this is not an arbitrary decorative device, but is rather consciously executed, visually manifesting an international elite aesthetic that encompasses fabric, form, iconographic idiom, lustre and colour.

Faience is the perfect medium through which to illustrate the ideologies present in the eastern Mediterranean in the Late Bronze Age, for it manifests tangible evidence for elite display throughout the entire region. Faience held visual and material value as a precious lustrous stone which could be manipulated and sculpted to form ornate designs, inlays and vessels. It could bear upon its translucent surface the vibrant colours that also conspicuously advertised elite ideological notions of both cult and power. The colours constructed from precious minerals, most importantly the rich hues of blue and purple, colours most associated with prestige and elite display, equally broadcast this same message of fitness to rule and divine sanction. The faience in the 'International Style' undeniably manifests the propaganda of power and kingship, but the intimate relationship between the spheres of the sacred and the profane in antiquity may never be undervalued.

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¹¹² I hesitate to employ the term quotidian, as faience never appears to have a mundane character even when constructed on a larger scale. Take, for example, the faience rings produced at Amarna as commemorative gifts from the ruler Akhenaten to his indigent population, their function while broader in impact, still relates directly to political and religious ideology, see Patch (1998, p. 33).

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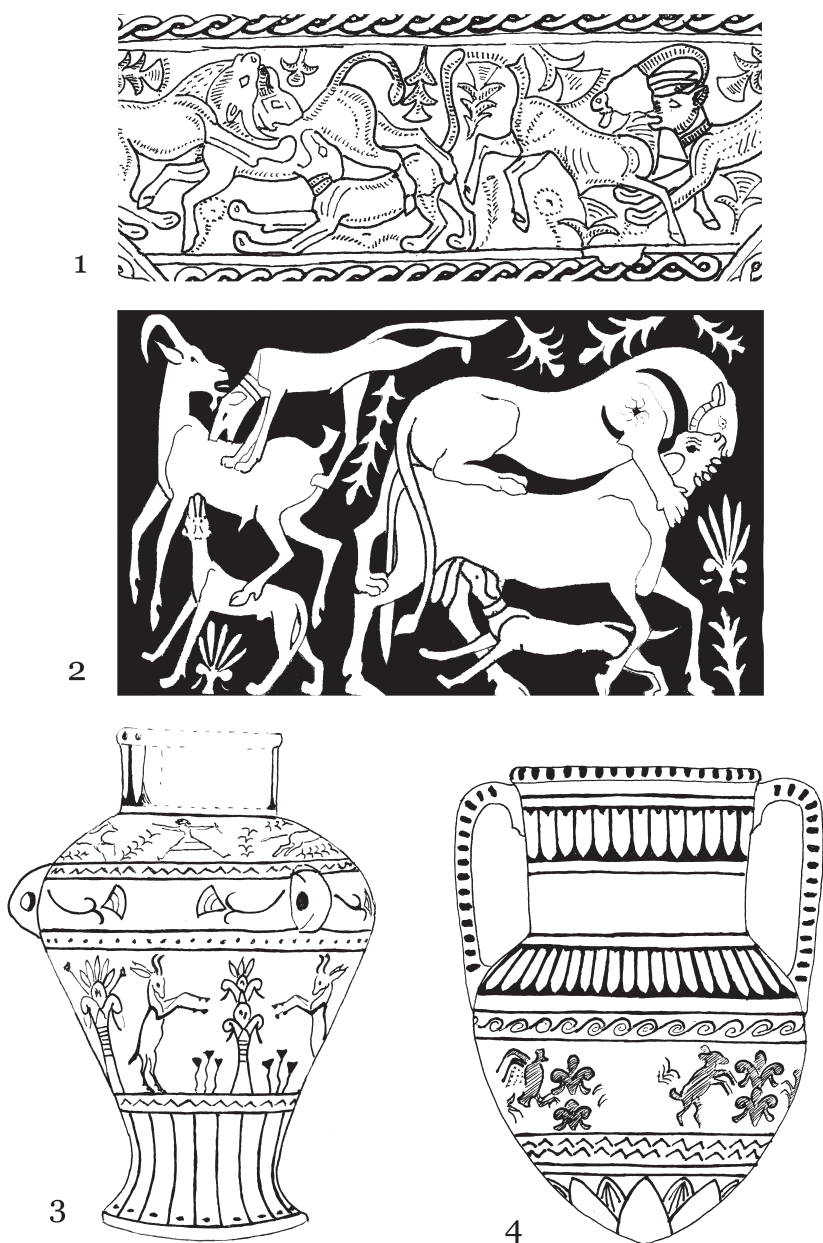
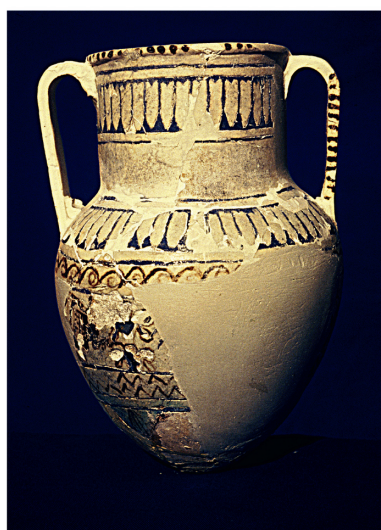


Fig. 1

1. Detail of bronze plaque with animal combat, Levant, Louvre Museum (A. Sinclair, after Aruz *et al.* 2008).
2. Detail of alabaster vessel inset with dark blue pigment showing a scene of animal combat, from the tomb of Tutankhamen, Cairo Museum (A. Sinclair, after Feldman 2006).
3. Bichrome faience vase with scenes of animal pursuit and caprids flanking sacred trees. Overall pale blue glaze with brown-black linear detail from Kition-Bamboula, Cyprus, Cyprus Museum (reconstruction A. Sinclair).
4. Polychrome faience amphora with imagery of caprids flanking sacred trees. Overall pale blue glaze with yellow base, dark blue insets and brown-black linear detail from Kition-Bamboula, Cyprus, Cyprus Museum (reconstruction A. Sinclair).



1



2



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Fig. 2

1. Bichrome faience vase with scenes of animal pursuit and caprids flanking sacred trees (photo courtesy of the Director of the Department of Antiquities, Cyprus).
 2. Polychrome faience amphora with imagery of caprids flanking sacred trees (photo courtesy of the Director of the Department of Antiquities, Cyprus).
 3. Polychrome faience conical rhyton with scene of animal pursuit.
- Overall deep blue glaze with red insets, and yellow and green detail from Kition, Cyprus, Cyprus Museum (photo courtesy of the Director of the Department of Antiquities, Cyprus).

Nabataean Jewellery and Accessories

Eyad ALMASRI

eyad@hu.edu.jo

Firas ALAWNEH

Firas-alawneh@hu.edu.jo

Fadi BALA'AWI

Fadi.balaawi@hu.edu.jo

Queen Rania's Institute of Tourism and Heritage
Hashemite University
Zarqa, JORDAN

Abstract

In ancient times, jewellery and accessories were considered one of the most important features of civilized societies. In addition to its aesthetic purpose, it used to reflect the high status of deities and humans; an amulet as part of a personal ornament was considered to give its wearer magical means, powers and protection.

Due to the lack of written information about Nabataean jewellery and accessories, the purpose of this research is to fill the gap in information about jewellery and its role in Nabataean society. The research uses archaeological findings to gain a better understanding of the kinds, shapes and material of Nabataean jewellery and accessories and its function and symbolism in Nabataean society.

Historical background

Before we present information about Nabataean Jewellery and accessories, it is useful to present a short narrative identifying the history and the location of the Nabataean kingdom.

From as early as the second century BC until the beginning of the second century AD the Nabataean kingdom was ruled from the city of Petra by a succession of kings who called themselves kings of the Nabatu. The kingdom encompassed a large part of Wadi Araba and the Negev in what is now southern Jordan and Israel, also including the northwest corner of

Saudi Arabia in addition to the Hauran region and Jebel El-Drouz on the southern part of Syria and Sinai in Egypt. (Fig. 1: 1).

The historian Diodorus mentioned the Nabataeans for the first time when he described the Nabataeans as nomads who depended for their livelihood on herding and commerce (II.1–5; XIX.2–95, 1). He reported that they transported goods from southern Arabia and the Persian Gulf to the Mediterranean Sea. The Nabataean kingdom reached its peak between the first century BC and the first century AD. About 25 BC, the Geographer Strabo described their capital Petra as a wealthy metropolis, whose inhabitants live in stone houses, with impressive agricultural fields, plentiful of food and aromatic substances (Strabo, XVI. 4, 26). Petra reached its height as a cosmopolitan trading centre during the reigns of Aretas IV and Malichus II, its decline beginning when it was annexed by the Romans in 106 AD.

Introduction

Information about Nabataean jewellery and accessories was very rare before archaeological surveys and excavations began at different Nabataean sites (Fig. 1: 1).

This study makes use of the following cultural remains that were discovered during the excavations:

- A. Original Nabataean jewellery pieces of different metals and shapes.
- B. Terracotta and stone sculptures representing deities and humans wearing a range of jewellery and accessories.
- C. The mural painting at el-Bared, Petra,¹ which includes figures of deities wearing jewellery.
- D. Nabataean coins² depicting a king and queen in relief, wearing crowns inlaid with gold and precious stones. They are also adorned with jewellery, such as earrings and necklaces, along with other accessories.
- E. Nabataean inscriptions that mention the names of a group of goldsmiths.

These ancient cultural remains are good evidence of Nabataean jewellery and accessories, including types made, materials employed and techniques used to make them, as well as who wore them and why.

¹ Glueck 1965, pls, 203 a, b.

² See Meshorer (1975) for photos of Nabataean coins.

Types of Nabataean jewellery

The goddess Ishtar is described, before she descends to the underworld, as wearing ornaments like earrings, bracelets, and anklets.³ Jewellery is thus associated with deities (immortals with particular characters and special abilities). Humans, in order to be like deities and immortals, would imitate them; one form of imitation was the wearing of jewellery and accessories.

Different kinds of Nabataean jewellery have been recognised from their cultural remains such as crowns, earrings, nose rings, necklaces, torques, fibula, girdle, rings, hand bracelets, armlets and anklets.

Crowns

The crown symbolised authority and power and has appeared on Nabataean sculptures in four shapes:

1. Crown with a circular disc between two horns and above them two palm leaves. It is associated with the goddess Isis (**Fig. 7: 1**).⁴
2. Double crown. Symbolised the united lower and upper kingdoms of Egypt. It is associated with the god Harpocrates.⁵ It is worth mentioning that the shape of this crown was used as an amulet in ancient Egyptian life.⁶
3. Towered crown. It is associated with the goddess Tyche⁷ (**Fig. 3: 1**), to reflect her role as a protector of the city.
4. Jewelled crown. It is inlaid with jewels; it can be seen above the head of the king Aretas IV and his wife.⁸ It also appears above the head of a number of Nabataean queens, like Huldu, the first wife of Aretas IV⁹ common on Nabataean coins especially.

Diadems

The diadems are common on Nabataean coins especially above the head of the king Aretas IV and his wife¹⁰. It also appears above the head

³ Aljader 1985, p. 367.

⁴ El-Khoury 2002, figs. 5-6.

⁵ Parlasca 1990, taf. II- IV.12, 13, 15; Parr 1990, p. 83, fig.2.

⁶ Andrews 1994, p. 7

⁷ Glueck 1965, p. 5 97, pls. 45a,b,48; Joukowsky 1996, figs. 22a,b.

⁸ Meshorer 1975, p. 43; Rawahneh: 2002, p. 91, pls. 1-4, 16-18, 21, 22, 33-43.

⁹ Meshorer 1975, p. 43, 57, 65.

¹⁰ Meshorer 1975, p. 43; Rawahneh: 2002, p. 91, pls. 1-4, 16-18, 21, 22, 33-43.

of a number of Nabataean queens, like Huldu, the first wife of Aretas IV.¹¹

Earrings

Earrings have been common among Arab women in both ancient and modern times, though not for men, and come in a variety of shapes and materials. They were used in Palmyra, an Arab kingdom in modern Syria,¹² as well as in Hatra, another Arab kingdom in modern Iraq¹³; both Arab kingdoms were contemporary with the Nabataean kingdom.

The Nabataean queens Huldu and Shuqaila II, the wives of the king Aretas IV, appear on his coins wearing earrings, one of them shaped in the form of a spiral.¹⁴

There have been a number of discoveries of earrings from different Nabataean sites, an early discovery came to us from Petra; it includes an earring made of iron, found on the right ear of a young female¹⁵. Others include two gold ones found near a skeleton and a fragment of a third which is a small gold ring that could have been used as an earring.¹⁶

Two pairs of earrings were found in a tomb at Mampsis (Kurnub).¹⁷ Three gold circular earrings were uncovered at Mamshit, two of them had schematic eyes and a nose (Fig. 2: 5–6), these are similar to the shape of the eyes and nose that appear on a rectangular slab stone from Petra known as the Eye Idol (Fig. 8: 3–4). A third one includes images of the goddess Al-Uzza in the shape of a nude female holding her hair with her raised hands (Fig. 2: 4) – the same pose as Aphrodite, shown in fig 29. (Fig. 8: 1). The same female figure appears in relief on a gold pendant from Avdat.¹⁸ The basic shape of the three is a disc surrounded by a gold filigree braid. The surface is adorned with two inlaid semi precious stones and clusters of golden grains.¹⁹

The figure of the goddess Al-Uzza (the main Nabataean goddess), who is identified with Aphrodite, was found in a bilingual inscription on a ring from the island of Cos²⁰. Depicted as Aphrodite-Venus, this indicated that

¹¹ Meshorer 1975, p. 43, 57, 65.

¹² Colledge 1976, p. 6 151, 2.

¹³ Aljader 1985, p. 379.

¹⁴ Meshorer 1975, p. 43, 57, 65.

¹⁵ Hammond 1960, p. 30.

¹⁶ Zayadine 1974, pl. LXIV: 2; Zayadine 1979, pl. XCI: 2.

¹⁷ Rosenthal 1964, p. 95.

¹⁸ Patrich 1990, p. 138, pl. III. 46, c.

¹⁹ Patrich 1984, pp. 8688; Patrich 1990, p. 138, 139.

²⁰ Patrich 1990, p. 139.

the wearer was a member of her cult and expected the goddess to offer her fertility, birth, plenty, beauty and blessings.

A group of earrings made from gold and copper were found at Khirbet edh-Dharih.²¹ The copper one has a ball shape pendant made of seashell (Fig. 1: 3), while the gold one is a fabulous bird suspended from a braided wire band (Fig. 2: 1).

Nose Rings

Three nose-rings at three Nabataean sites have also been unearthed, the first one at Avdat (Oboda) city dump, made of gold.²² The second one was found in a tomb at Mampsis (Kurnub) along with two pairs of earrings, one elaborately decorated and the other simpler, both worn together. This ring and the one mentioned before are similar in size, style, and technique; the third one was found in Petra and is now in a private collection.²³

The Avdat nose-ring is decorated with a row of balls, the centre one with clusters of granulated gold (Fig. 2: 2) while the Mampsis example has several bunches of grapes on its lower part.²⁴

Necklaces

Compared to the Nabataean kingdom necklaces were more common in other contemporary Arab kingdoms, like Palmyra²⁵ and Hatra.²⁶

Nabataean necklaces were very rare in the sites excavated, until now only one example has been unearthed from Khirbet edh-Dharih; it consists of dark blue beads.²⁷

Because of the rarity of actual finds, the study of Nabataean necklaces depends mainly on the necklaces which appear on Nabataean sculptures representing deities and humans, as well as on coins with impressions of Nabataean kings and queens.

Nabataean necklaces can be classified into five types: triangular ornamentation, twisted metal, pearl or beaded (pectorals), crescent symbol and laurel wreath necklaces.

²¹ Al-Muheisen 2004, p. 204; Fredrick *et al.* 2002, pl. 100, 103.

²² Rosenthal 1964, p. 95, pl. 16.c.

²³ Rosenthal 1964, p. 95.

²⁴ Rosenthal 1964, p. 95.

²⁵ Colledge 1976.

²⁶ Aljader 1985, p. 379.

²⁷ Al-Muheisen 2004, p. 204.

A. Triangular Ornamentation

This necklace consists of a series of small upside down triangles. A few sculptures of deities show them with triangular ornamentation on the neckline of the bodice, similar to the dolphin-grain goddesses from Khirbet el-Tannur (**Fig. 3: 3**).²⁸ This triangular ornamentation also appears on two busts in relief on two architraves from the same site.²⁹

B. Twisted, Metal Neckpiece

This is a twisted, metal neckpiece for the bodice, with simple terminals or ending sometimes with a circular pendant. It was worn by the grain goddess and Tyche at Khirbet el-Tannur ³⁰ and by the terracotta figurine of Isis from Petra (**Fig. 7: 1**).

C. Pearls and Beaded Necklace or Pectorals

The wife of the Nabataean king Aretas IV appeared on his coins wearing a necklace of pearls circled three times around her neck.³¹

Dark blue beaded necklaces appeared on a female skeleton found at Khirbet edh-Dharih.³² These kinds of bead necklaces also appeared on some human terracotta figurines from Petra, (**Fig. 4: 3**)³³ and where worn by Melpomene, the goddess of tragedy from the same site (**Fig. 3: 4**).

D. Necklace with crescent symbol

This necklace consists of big beads with an upside down lunar-shaped pendant hanging from it. It was worn by male and female deities and humans, appearing on terracotta figurines found at Petra (**Fig. 4: 1–2**).

It is worth mentioning that these kinds of necklaces were worn by Ishtar, a goddess of Palmyra.³⁴

E. Laurel wreath necklace

This necklace consists of a thick laurel wreath with circular pendant hanging at the front of the chest. It appears on one of the high relief busts of the zodiac, namely Taurus from Khirbet edh-Dharih (**Fig. 5: 1**).

²⁸ Glueck 1965, p. 146, pls. 1, 27, 28a, b.

²⁹ Glueck 1965, p. 146, pl. 12a, b.

³⁰ Glueck 1965, p. 5 146, pls. 25, 45b, 53a, b.

³¹ Meshorer 1975, p. 43; Rawahneh 2002, p. 77, pls. 18, 21.

³² Al-Muheisen 2004, p. 204.

³³ Khairy 1990, fig. 53, pl. 27.

³⁴ Colledge 1976, p. 151.

Torques

Torques were very rare in the sites excavated, until now only one example has been unearthed from Petra, an iron neck torque found at a female burial; it had a longitudinally grooved stone ball, its type suggests it may originate from the Byzantine period.³⁵

One of the distinctive features of the dress of several of the Nabataean gods and goddesses of Khirbet el-Tannur is the use of the torque. It is the ornamental, twisted, metal neckpiece whose terminals consist of lion heads touching either side of a circular object that may have planetary significance.

It was worn at Khirbet el-Tannur, not only by Zeus-Hadad-Belshameen (Fig. 2: 3), but also by several of the goddesses of the Nabataean pantheon there, like Atargatis (Fig. 3: 2) and Tyche.³⁶

Fibula

The fibula or brooch was very common across different contemporary Arab centres such as Palmyra and Dura-Europos.³⁷ Nabataean males and females used it to fasten clothes together. One fibula was usually used, but two of them were used by Nike.³⁸ It appears in two shapes as it is shown on their sculptures:

- A. Simple fibula, consisting of interlocked circles. This kind of fibula appeared on statues of Hermes and Nike from Petra, Khirbet el-Tannur, and Khirbet edh-Dharih (Fig. 7: 3).³⁹ The circle shapes of the fibula may represent the sun god.
- B. A fibula in the shape of a rosette. This kind of fibula appeared on statues of Helios (Fig. 7: 2) and Hermes; two rosettes also appear in front of Nike's right and left shoulders at Khirbet el-Tannur.⁴⁰

Girdle

Seen on some sculptures and terracotta figurines, the Nabataeans used girdles to beautify their dress and hold up their clothes. It appears in two

³⁵ Hammond 1975, p. 13, pl. 1: 4

³⁶ Glueck 1965, p. 207, pls. 44a,b, 45a.

³⁷ Colledge 1976, p. 151, 2.

³⁸ Glueck 1965, p. 5 pl. 48

³⁹ Wright 1967–8, pl. XVIc; Parr 1967: 8, pl. IV b; Glueck 1965, p. 321, pl. 145; Al-Muhsen: 1996, p. 222; Fredrick *et al.* 2002, pl. 67.

⁴⁰ Glueck 1965, pls. 48, 136, 146a.

different shapes: the first one is twisted below the chest as worn in the Belshameen and Nike statues from Khirbet el-Tannur (Figs. 2:3; 3: 1)⁴¹ and the statues of Nike from Khirbet edh-Dharih;⁴² the second is worn on the waist, connected with one or two bands that trail from it (Fig. 8: 1–2).

Rings

Rings were very rare in Nabataean jewellery; they do not appear on their sculptures. Of the two ring bezels found at Khirbet edh-Dharih, one of them is made of garnet dating to the Nabataean period (Fig. 1: 2), while the other one is dated to the Roman period⁴³. A picture of a standing winged victory goddess has been carved on it.

This ring suggests two things. Firstly the method of manufacture, which reflects the skill of Nabataean goldsmiths in handling metals, molds and inlaying precious stone, also the skill of the Nabataean artist in drawing and carving the goddess figure on the bezel of the ring. Secondly, the idea of using the ring as an amulet; this is suggested by the interpretation of Nike as a victory goddess on the bezel of the ring, which may have been thought to provide its wearer with victory, protection and good luck.

Hand Bracelets

Bracelets can be seen on the wrists of gods, goddesses and mortals. They were very simple or sometimes twisted and ornamented with a few decorations.

A number of bracelets made of different metals have been found in tombs at Petra. One of them is a fragment of a silver bracelet, while another is a child's bracelet made from copper wire. In addition, a bronze one has its side ending in a point which may be the tail of a serpent or dragon.⁴⁴ Also, a group of bracelets made of gold were found at Khirbet edh-Dharih (Fig. 5: 3–6).⁴⁵ Two of the Khirbet edh-Dharih bracelets are twisted, the terminal of one of them is ornamented with a palm leaf, while the other has the terminal ornamented with a star shape (Fig. 5: 5). Additionally, bracelets appear on stone and terracotta figurines representing deities and humans (Figs. 4: 1, 3, 4; 6: 1, 2; 7: 1; 8: 1).

⁴¹ Glueck 1965, pl. 41, 48.

⁴² Fredrick *et al.* 2002, pl. 67.

⁴³ Fredrick *et al.* 2002, pl.104, 121.

⁴⁴ Horsfield 1941, p.152, 154.

⁴⁵ Al-Muheisen 2004, p. 204; Fredrick *et al.* 2002, p. pl. 94–96, 98.

Armlets

There are two kinds of armlets that appear on Nabataean sculptures. The first one is common: a wide, single ring, with a simple decoration. The second one is less common, consisting of a chain bracelet; it appears on the left arm of the winged Nike upholding the Zodiacal sphere (Fig. 3: 1).⁴⁶ Similar or related armlets grace other Nabataean sculptures from the northern part of the Nabataean kingdom in the Jabel Druze. On the upper right arm of a seated male figure from Qanawat in Syria, are two armlets.⁴⁷ Meanwhile, a straight chain of three interconnected links of the Khirbet el-Tannur type is suspended from the right shoulder of the upper of two superimposed male busts found at Nabataean Si'a in the Jabel Druze in Syria.⁴⁸

There are also armlets and anklets on various figures, including Pan, Eros and Mercury in the Nabataean mural at el-Bared, Petra.⁴⁹

The simple armlet also figures on one of the musicians and a nude goddess as they appear on terracotta figurines from Petra (Fig. 4: 2). The main Nabataean god, Dushara, is carved in reliefs at Petra wearing three twisted rings above each other on his right arm.⁵⁰ There are also different kinds of armlets worn by deities from other contemporary Arab centres like Palmyra in Syria and Hatra in Iraq.⁵¹

Anklets

In two Nabataean sites, Petra and Khirbet edh-Dharih, skeletal remains of a female were found in which she appeared to be wearing an anklet made from iron.⁵² This suggests that this was an ornament for Nabataean women and also connected with funerary beliefs. The anklet is also worn by many deities who appear as terracotta figurines from Petra (Fig. 6: 1–3). It is also found in other contemporary Arab centres, like Palmyra.⁵³

⁴⁶ Glueck 1965, p. 207, pl. 48.

⁴⁷ Dunand 1934, pl. XVII: 64.

⁴⁸ Dunand 1934, pl. XIX: 88.

⁴⁹ Glueck 1965, p. 434, pl. 203.

⁵⁰ Tina 1990, pl. II.

⁵¹ Glueck 1965, p. 435.

⁵² Al-Muheisen 2004, p. 204; Hammond 1960, p. 30.

⁵³ Colledge 1976, p. 152.

Nabataean accessories

Head Band

The head-band is a rare accessory for the Nabataeans; we have one example, representing the head of Dionysus who tied his hair with a ribbon across his forehead (Fig. 6: 4).⁵⁴

Precious stones or metals

Nabataeans used to inlay some of their deities' statues with different kinds of precious stones and metals. Bronze metal inlay is found on the eyes and nose of the Al-Uzza cubic shape statue found at the winged lions temple at Petra⁵⁵ (Fig. 8: 3). Also, the eyes and the cavity which appears on the centre of the laurel crown of the same goddess was once inlayed with precious stones⁵⁶ (Fig. 8: 4).

It is worth mentioning that the Nabataeans used to inlay some of their jewellery with precious stones as appears on the ring mentioned earlier, which is inlayed with bezel.

Significance of material in Nabataean jewellery

The profession of forming metal jewellery has been mentioned in a number of Nabataean inscriptions⁵⁷. The names of goldsmiths such as "Wahab Elhi",⁵⁸ and "Zeyd Ber Teim"⁵⁹ have been mentioned in inscriptions. This indicates that the manufacture and selling of jewellery was by local people, in a society of wealthy Nabataeans.

Strabo mentioned that works of art in silver and gold were another Nabataean industry Strabo (Geog. XVI.4, 26). As mentioned earlier, the Nabataeans used different kinds of metals to make their jewellery and ornaments, such as gold, silver, bronze, copper and iron. Gold jewellery forms the majority of the objects excavated to date. Importance must be ascribed

⁵⁴ Lyttelton and Blagg 1990, pl. 1.

⁵⁵ Moutsopoulos 1990, pl. V:2.

⁵⁶ Moutsopoulos 1990, pl. V:1.

⁵⁷ Al-Fasi 1993, p. 198, 9.

⁵⁸ Jaussen and Savignac 1911, p. 58 119N

⁵⁹ CIS, 11,372.

to the material from which the jewellery was made, especially when it is used for religious purposes or as an amulet.

Symbolically, gold can be connected with the sun god, while silver was linked with the moon god or goddess and was often employed to represent the lunar disc.⁶⁰ These kinds of precious materials used to be sacred in ancient times; the gold, for instance, lasts forever, so it was used in religious beliefs which concerned the afterlife.

Function and symbolism of jewellery and accessories

As part of their religious and social beliefs, the Nabataean people pierced their ears and noses to wear jewellery. Undoubtedly, it used to be worn by deities, royalty, and nobility. Jewellery was used not only to show their beauty, richness and high status, but also, it seems, because they believed that certain jewellery could protect them in their daily life from sickness, evil, enemies, and bad luck.

They buried some jewellery with their dead as part of their religious beliefs of the afterlife. This was done by depositing with the body a quantity of jewellery, adorning the deceased at the time of burial, as is clear from arrangements of burial remains.⁶¹ There are many examples of jewellery deposited inside burials. For example an iron neck torque was found in a female burial and two gold earrings found near a skeleton at Petra⁶², the skeletal remains of woman from Khirbet edh-Dharih, was found wearing an anklet, bracelet and a dark blue beaded necklace.⁶³ These burial customs suggest something about Nabataean beliefs of the afterlife and that their jewellery helped them in their journey to the life of immortality.

Different kinds of symbols appear on jewellery and accessories, such as animal, plant and heaven symbols:

Animal Symbols

A. Lion's Head:

Found at Khirbet el-Tannur and worn by Ballshameen, Atargatis and Tyche as a neckpiece whose terminals consist of lions' heads (Fig. 2: 3; 3: 2).

⁶⁰ Andrews 1994, p. 105.

⁶¹ Hammond 1960, p. 30; Hammond 1975, p. 13, pl. 1: 4.

⁶² Hammond 1975, p. 13, pl. 1:4; Zayadine 1974, pl. LXIV: 2.

⁶³ Al-Muheisen 2004, p. 204.

It is a symbol of royal and divine authority, emphasising the great might of the main Nabataean god Ballshameen. It can be interpreted as an ornament of divine power, rather than a symbol associated with any particular god. In general, lions form the accompaniment of Atargatis, who is a consort of Ballshameen in the Nabataean-Syrian-Parthian world of the Hellenistic period; she was above all the guardian of her people. The fact that Tyche wears a lion's torque emphasises their consanguinity.⁶⁴ The lion undoubtedly symbolised fierceness and bravery, so it is expected to endow its wearer with the same qualities. It also has a protective function.⁶⁵

B. Seashell:

It appears as a ball shape pendant on one of the earrings (Fig. 1: 3). The seashell usually symbolises birth and innovation.

C. Fabulous bird:

It appears hanging from a long twisted ribbon on an earring made of gold from Khirbet edh-Dharih (Fig. 2: 1). Real or fabulous animals are widespread in ancient art especially in Mesopotamia and Egypt; they usually represent a god or goddess.

Plant Symbols

A. Rosette:

Used as a fibula to fasten clothes together (Figs. 3:1; 7: 2) or for beauty and symbolic purposes as appears on the chest of one of the Gemini twins (Fig. 5: 2). As mentioned earlier, the symbol of a rosette can be interpreted with two meanings: the first one is as a sun with rays, so in this case it represents the main male sun god; the second possibility is that because it's a plant symbol it may represent a female goddess, so in this case the people who use this symbol can expect fertility, plenty and prosperity in their life.

B. Laurel Wreath:

Appears on some Nabataean coins, crowning the head of some of the Nabataean kings and queens;⁶⁶ it also appears as a necklace (Fig. 5: 1). It symbolises the victory which the Nabataean king and kingdoms need, and it may symbolise blessings and immortality.

⁶⁴ Glueck 1965, p. 207, pls. 41, 44, 398.

⁶⁵ Andrews 1994, p. 65.

⁶⁶ See Meshorer (1975) for photos of Nabataean coins.

C. Bunches of Grapes:

Connected with the nose-ring of Mampsis. The vine signifies the drink of immortality, a foretaste of joy hereafter.⁶⁷ Because each bunch of grapes consists of many seeds, it may symbolise fertility, plenty, and prosperity. This symbol is very common in different ancient Arab kingdoms such as Nabataean, Palmyra and Hatra; it appears as a relief on statues and building facades.

D. Palm Leaf:

It decorates one of the terminals of a bracelet; (Fig. 5: 5) it may symbolise victory over death.

E. Grains:

The surfaces of three earrings from Mamshit were adorned with clusters of golden grains (Fig. 2: 4–6). It symbolises germination, fertility, growth and fruitfulness, these meanings were associated with the role of Al-Uzza goddess who appeared on one of these earrings. Females who wore these earrings expected to be endowed with these attributes.

Heaven Symbols

A. Crescent:

Appears as the pendant of a necklace worn by a statue of a boy and a nude goddess made of terracotta (Fig. 4: 1–2). Pairs of crescent symbols appear upside down on one of the twins of Gemini statue (Fig. 5: 2). The crescent has religious significance as a cultic symbol in different forms in the ancient Middle East. It usually symbolises the moon god. If it is worn by a human, it seems that this amulet was intended to link the owner with the ideas of renewal and regeneration inherent in the symbolism of the waning and waxing of the moon.

B. Star:

Appears on one of the terminals of a bracelet (Fig. 5: 5), it may symbolise the planet Venus. It could indicate one who follows the goddess Venus or, because Venus was the goddess of beauty and fertility, the wearer may expect to be endowed with these properties.

⁶⁷ Colledge 1976, p. 210.

C. Circular Pendant:

The circular necklace pendant appears in many examples of statues from different Nabataean sites (Figs. 2: 3; 3: 2; 5: 1; 7: 1). It can be interpreted as a sign of the sun god.

Conclusion

In addition to its main purpose to show beauty, wealth and high status, it seems that the Nabataeans often used different kinds and shapes of jewellery and accessories as amulets, as a personal ornament which, because of its shape, material, or colour, was believed to endow its wearer with magical means, powers, or capabilities. At the very least it should afford some kind of protection. These benefits for the wearer were obtained from the deities and other symbols which appeared on some of the jewellery and accessories.

Incorporating human, animal, plant and heaven shapes in jewellery is widespread throughout Nabataean jewellery and accessories. These represented deities and had symbolic purposes. Two deities in human shape appeared on Nabataean jewellery: Al-Uzza, the goddess of fertility and beauty on a pendant from Avdat⁶⁸, and on an earring from Mamshit, shown in the shape of a nude female holding her hair with her raised hands (Fig. 2: 4). The other deity is the victory goddess Nike who appeared on a ring bezel from Khirbet edh-Dharih (Fig. 1: 2). All the Nabataeans understood the meaning of these two deities.

Jewellery found inside burials, associated with the bodies of the deceased, tell us that amulets and jewellery incorporating amuletic forms were an essential adornment, especially as part of the funerary equipment for the dead, as well as for the living. So, amuletic jewellery worn in life for their magical properties could be taken to the tomb for use in life after death.

Original Nabataean jewellery found at Petra, Khirbet edh-Dharih, Mampsis (Kurnub), Mamshit, and Avdat (Oboda) (Fig. 1: 1) with their inscriptions mentioning the metallurgic professions that made jewellery, can be interpreted as evidence for the existence of Nabataean jewellers and their workshops in different parts of the Nabataean kingdom, as well as the skills of the Nabataean jeweller who used different kinds of metals to make their jewellery and ornaments. Gold forms the majority of the objects found to date, in addition to silver, bronze, copper and iron. There must

⁶⁸ Patrich 1990, 138, pl. III. 46, c.

be importance ascribed to the material from which the jewellery was made, especially when it is used for social or religious purposes or as an amulet.

It seems that the inlaying of precious stones was not popular in Nabataean jewellery, although it can be easily recognised in their sculpture⁶⁹; the main example we have is a ring bezel made of garnet from Khirbet edh-Dharikh (Fig. 1: 2). The surface of an earring from Mamshit was also inlayed with two semi precious stones (Fig. 2: 5–6). In summary, Nabataeans used different kinds of jewellery and accessories in a variety of shapes and material, to reflect prosperity, social and religious beliefs.

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⁶⁹ Moutsopoulos 1990, pls. vi, v2.

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Fig. 1: 1 Map of the Nabataean Kingdom during the reign of Oboda II and Aretas IV, 30 BC to AD 40 (after Patrich 1990)



Fig. 1: 2 Ring bezel made of garnet, Khirbet edh-Dharikh
(after Al-Muheisen *et al.* 2002)



Fig. 1: 3 Copper earring with seashell stone
(after Al-Muheisen *et al.* 2002)



Fig. 2:

- 1 Gold earring in a shape of a bird, Khirbet edh-Dharih (after Al-Muheisen *et al.* 2002)
- 2 Nose-ring from Avdat (Obada) (after Rosental 1974)
- 3 High relief statue of Belshameen (after Almasri 1997)
- 4 Al-Uzza earring (after Patrich 1984)
- 5-6 Two earrings, Mamshit (after Patrich 1984)



Fig. 3:

- 1 High relief statue of Nike supported Zodiac Tyche, Khirbet el-Tannur (after Almasri 1997)
- 2 High relief statue of goddess Atargatis, Khirbet el-Tannur (after Almasri 1997)
- 3 High relief statue of Dolphin goddess (after Almasri 1997)
- 4 High relief bust of Melpomene carrying a mask, Petra (after McKenzie 2003)

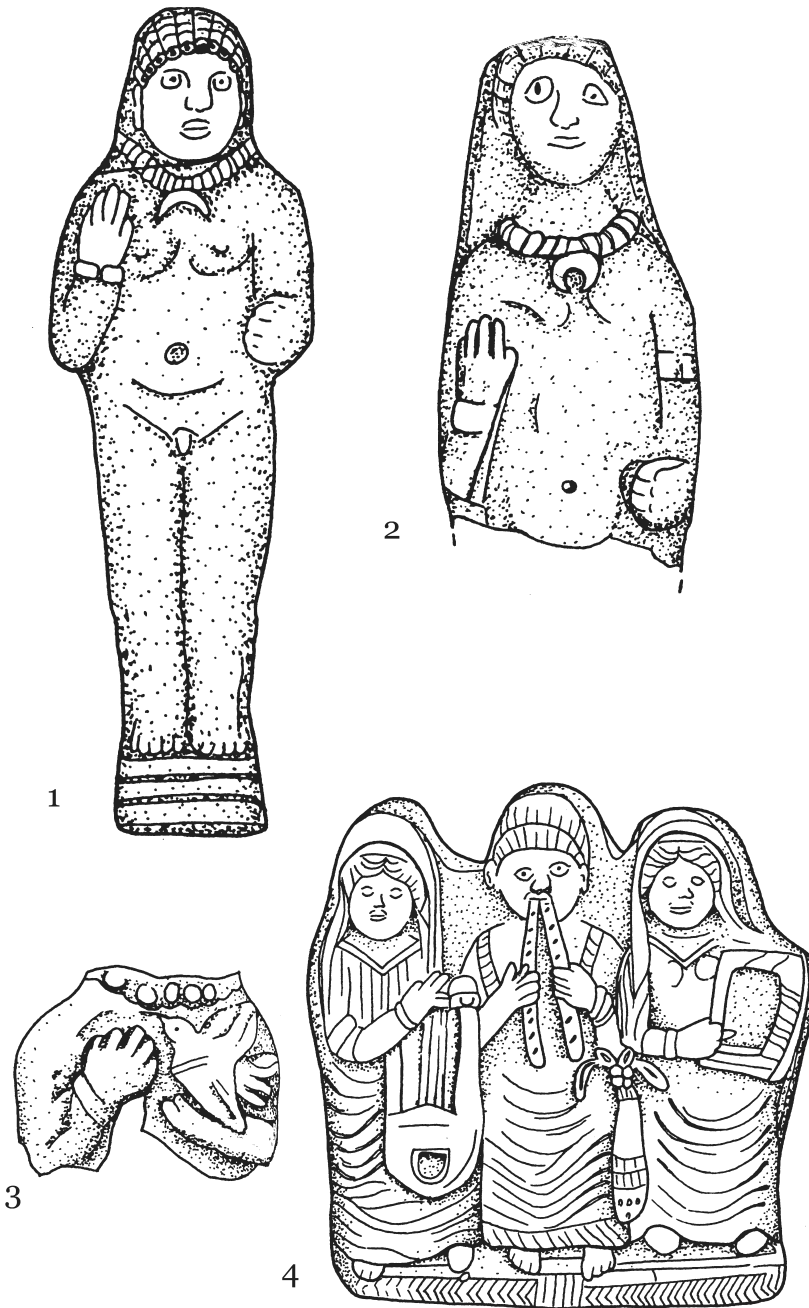


Fig. 4:

- 1–2 Terracotta figurines of standing nude god (after El-Khoury 2002)
- 3 Human terracotta figurine holding a bird, Petra (after Almasri 1997)
- 4 A group of musicians, Petra (after El-Khoury 2002; Almasri and Abdelazez 2010)

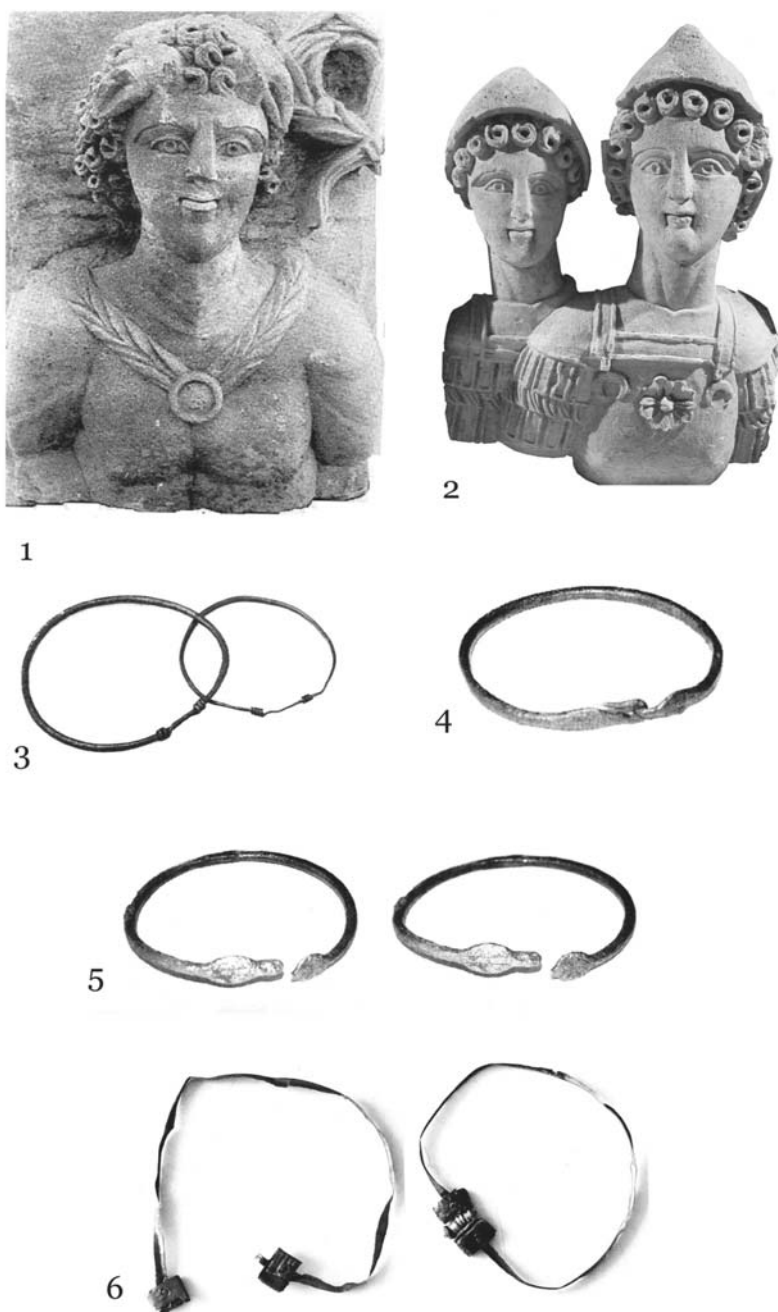


Fig. 5:

- 1 High relief statue of bust of Taurus (after Al-Muheisen *et al.* 2002)
- 2 Round statue of Gemini, Khirbet edh-Dharih (after Al-Muheisen *et al.* 2002)
- 3 Two bracelets made of copper (after Al-Muheisen *et al.* 2002)
- 4 Copper bracelet (after Al-Muheisen *et al.* 2002)
- 5 Two bracelets made of copper (after Al-Muheisen *et al.* 2002)
- 6 Two bracelets made of gold, Khirbet edh-Dharih (after Al-Muheisen *et al.* 2002)

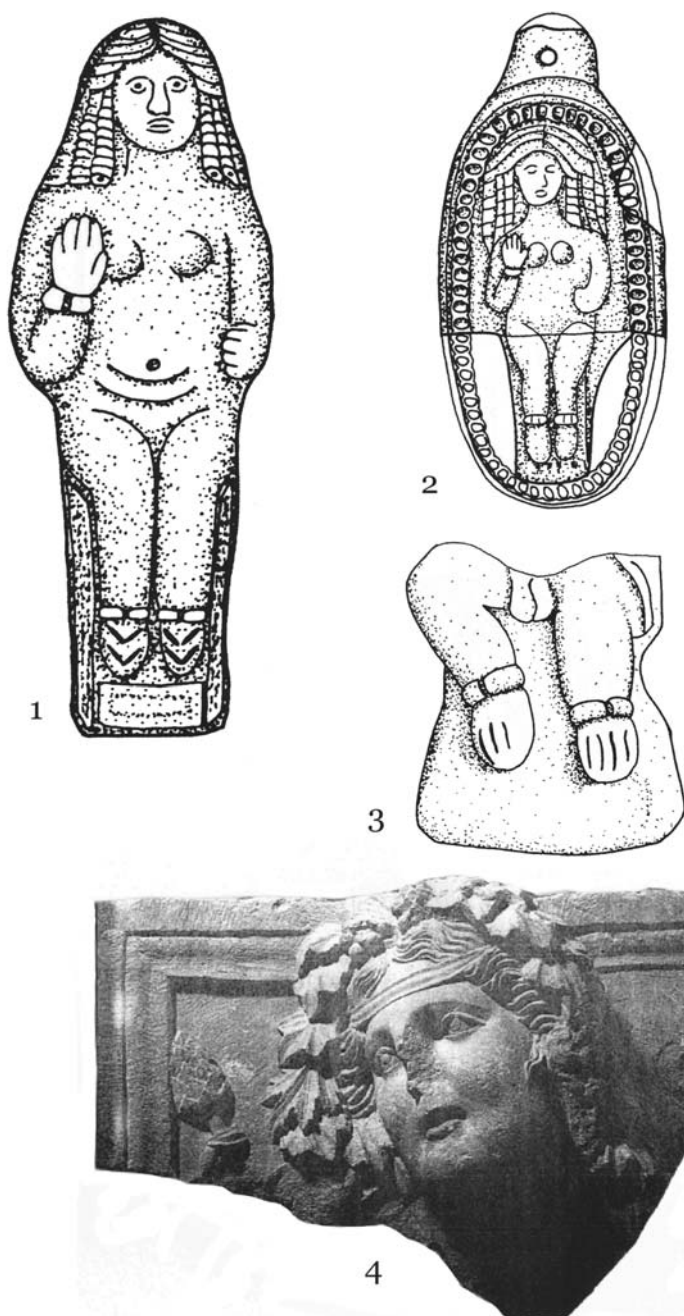


Fig. 6:

- 1 Terracotta figurine, enthroned goddess (after El-Khoury 2002)
- 2 Terracotta figurine, enthroned goddess (after El-Khoury 2002)
- 3 Lower part of Harpocrates, Petra (after Almasri 1997)
- 4 Relief of Dionysus, Petra (after Almasri 1997)

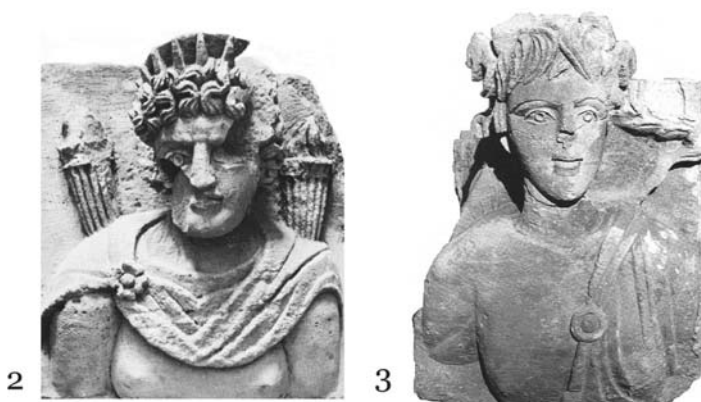


Fig. 7:

- 1 Isis terracotta figurines, Petra (after Almasri 1997; El-Khoury 2002)
- 2 Helios relief with torches, Khirbet el-Tannur (after Almasri 1997)
- 3 Bust of Cancer, Khirbet edh-Dharieh (after Almasri 1997)

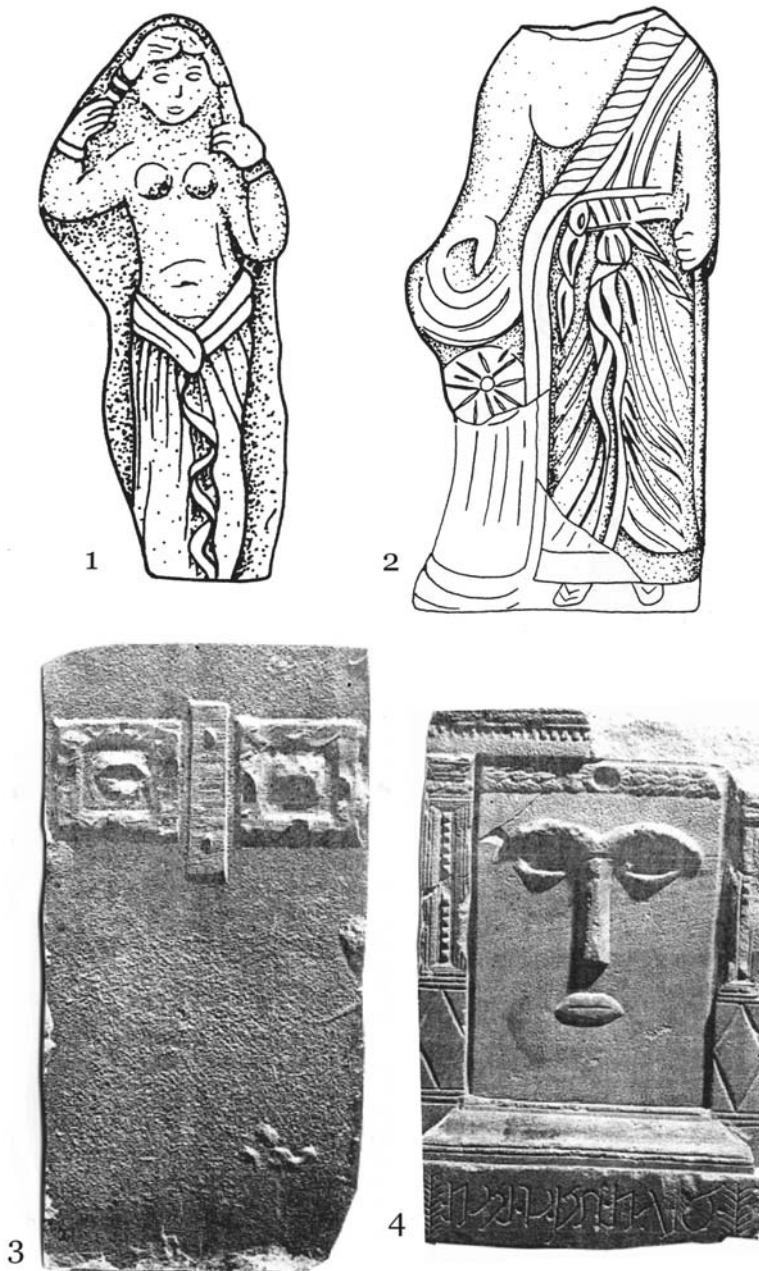


Fig. 8:

- 1 Terracotta figurines, Aphrodite Anadyomene (after El-Khoury 2002)
- 2 Standing human, Petra (after El-Khoury 2002)
- 3 Round statue of Eye idol, Petra (after Almasri 1997)
- 4 Round statue of Eye idol, Petra (after Almasri 1997)

Some Notes about the Functions of the Particle *bal* in the Qur'ān

Yehudit DROR

Department of Arabic Language and Literature
University of Haifa
Mount Carmel, Haifa 31905
ISRAEL
Email: judror@gmail.com

Abstract

The particle bal in the Qur'ān has two main functions. It can amend a previous statement, this use is called by the Arab grammarians 'istidrāk. The particle bal is also used for 'idrāb, i.e., to reverse or to digress from what was mentioned previously.

This paper presents an additional function of this particle. In five verses: Q 2:116; 4:49; 13:31; 34:27 and 38:2 bal is used as an emphasis particle and thus should be translated as "only" "just" or "indeed" and not as it is usually translated as "nay", "but" or "on the contrary".

The idea that the particle bal in the Qur'ān has also an emphatic usage came from the Biblical Hebrew, in which the particle aval which is parallel to the Arabic particle bal has this usage.

The particle *bal* in Arabic is translated as: "nay", "nay rather", "not so", "on the contrary", "but." Additionally, *bal* can be followed by a noun or by a complete sentence and it has three functions:

1. *'istidrāk*: After a negative proposition or a prohibition, *bal* is used to rectify or amend (the previous statement)¹, as in the following:

وَلَا تَحْسَبَنَّ الَّذِينَ قُتِلُوا فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ أَمْوَاتًا بَلْ أَحْيَاءٌ عِنْدَ رَبِّهِمْ يُرْزَقُونَ

wa-lā taḥsabanna llaḏīna qutilū fī sabīli llāhi 'amwātān bal 'aḥyā'un 'inda rabbiḥim yurzaqūna (Q 3:169)

¹ Wright 1896–1898, Part third, §184 C, p. 334; See also Wansbrough 1983, p. 531.

“Count not those who were killed in God’s way as dead, but rather as living with their Lord, by him provided.”²

2. *’idrāb*: After an affirmative proposition or a command, *bal* is used to denote turning away, or digressing, from what has preceded it³, as in the following:

قَالَ كَمْ لَبِثْتَ قَالَ لَبِثْتُ يَوْمًا أَوْ بَعْضَ يَوْمٍ قَالَ بَلْ لَبِثْتَ مِائَةَ عَامٍ
qāla kam labittu qāla labittu yawman ’aw ba’da yawmin qāla bal labittu mi’ata ’āmin (Q 2:259)

“How long hast thou tarried? He said, I have tarried a day, or a part of a day. Said he, Nay; thou hast tarried a hundred years.”⁴

3. The particle *bal* also denotes transition from one intention, *i.e.*, topic/theme, to another intention⁵, as in these examples:

وَلَا تُكَلِّفُ نَفْسًا إِلَّا وُسْعَهَا وَلَدَيْنَا كِتَابٌ يَنْطِقُ بِالْحَقِّ وَهُمْ لَا يُظْلَمُونَ بَلْ قُلُوبُهُمْ فِي غَمْرَةٍ مِنْ هَٰذَا

wa-lā nukallifu nafsan ’illā wus’ahā wa-ladaynā kitābun yanṭiqu bi-l-ḥaqqi wa-hum lā yuḏlamūna bal qulūbuhum fī ḡamratin min hādā (Q 23:62–63)

“And with us is a book speaking truth, and they shall not be wronged. Nay, but their hearts are in perplexity regarding this.”⁶

Examination of all sentences that include the particle *bal* shows that the main function of this particle in the Qur’ān is either to denote digression (*’idrāb*) or to rectify the previous statement (*’istidrāk*). However, in verses 2:116, 4:49, 13:31, 34:27 and 38:2 the function of the particle *bal* is not entirely clear, although in different translations of the Qur’ān *bal* is understood as a particle that denotes digressing, *i.e.*, *’idrāb*. The following are examples of translation in which the translations of *bal* do not fit their context:

وَقَالُوا اتَّخَذَ اللَّهُ وَلَدًا سُبْحَانَهُ بَلْ لَّهُ مَا فِي السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ
wa-qālū ittaḥada llāhu waladan subḥānahū bal lahū mā fī s-samāwāti wa-l-’arḍi (Q 2:116)

² Arberry 1964, p. 66.

³ Wright 1896–1898, Part third, §B, p. 335; See also Wansbrough 1983, p. 531; Reckendorf 1898, §117, pp. 315–317.

⁴ Arberry 1964, p. 39.

⁵ Suyūṭī 1979, vol. 5, p. 256.

⁶ Arberry 1964, p. 343.

“And they say, ‘God has taken to him a son.’ Glory be to him! Nay, to him belongs all that is in the heavens and the earth.”⁷

„Sie sprechen: «Gott hat einen Sohn angenommen.» Gepriesen sei er! Nein, sein ist, was in den Himmeln und auf Erden ist.“⁸

The problem in understanding the function of the particle *bal* in the verses cited above stems also from the Exegeses of the Qur’ān. Thus, for example, whenever *bal* is used *li-’idrāb*, it is mentioned by the commentator, as in the following examples:

قَالُوا أَجِئْتَنَا بِالْحَقِّ أَمْ أَنْتَ مِنَ اللَّاعِبِينَ قَالَ بَلْ رَبُّكُمْ رَبُّ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ الَّذِي فَطَرَهُنَّ

qālū ‘a-ġi’tanā bi-l-ḥaqqi ‘am ‘anta mina l-lā‘ibīna qāla bal rabbukum rabbu s-samāwāti wa-l-’arḍi lladī faṭarahunna (Q 21:55–56)

“They said, ‘What hast thou come to us with the truth, or art thou one of those that play?’ He said, ‘Nay, but your Lord is the Lord of the heavens and the earth who originated them.”⁹

Bayḍāwī explains this verse as follows:

قَالَ بَلْ رَبُّكُمْ رَبُّ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ الَّذِي فَطَرَهُنَّ: إضراب عن كونه لاعباً بإقامة البرهان على ما ادّعاه

*qāla bal rabbukum rabbu s-samāwāti wa-l-’arḍi lladī faṭarahunna: ‘idrāb ‘an kawnihi lā‘ibān bi-‘iqāmati l-burhāni ‘alā mā dda‘āhu*¹⁰.

“Nay, your Lord is the Lord of the heavens and the earth and originated them: *’idrāb*, digressing from the claim that he is (Allah), one of those who plays with the truth. The digression from this claim is achieved by bringing proofs against the opposed claims.”

An additional example is the following:

ضَرَبَ لَكُمْ مَثَلًا مِنْ أَنْفُسِكُمْ (...) بَلِ اتَّبَعَ الَّذِينَ ظَلَمُوا أَهْوَاءَهُمْ بِغَيْرِ عِلْمٍ
ḍaraba lakum maṭalan min ‘anfusikum (...) balī ttaba‘a lladīna ḡalamū ‘ahwā‘ahum bi-ġayri ‘ilmīn (Q 30:29)

“He has struck for you a similitude of yourself (...) Nay, but the evildoers follow their own caprices without knowledge.”¹¹

⁷ Arberry 1964, p. 14.

⁸ Bobzin 2010, p. 22.

⁹ Arberry 1964, p. 326.

¹⁰ Bayḍāwī 1966, p. 37

¹¹ Arberry 1964, p. 413.

Ṭabarī uses the adversative particle *lākinna* to explain the function of *bal*:

(بَلِ اتَّبَعَ الَّذِينَ ظَلَمُوا أَهْوَاءَهُمْ بِغَيْرِ عِلْمٍ) وَلَكِنَّ الَّذِينَ ظَلَمُوا أَنْفُسَهُمْ فَكَفَرُوا بِاللَّهِ.
اتَّبَعُوا أَهْوَاءَهُمْ.

“(bali ttaba’a lladīna ḡalamū ’ahwā’ahum) wa-lākinna lladīna ḡalamū’an-fusahum fa-kafarū bi-llahi, ttaba’ū ’ahwā’ahum.”¹²

“(but the evildoers follow their own will) but the evildoers and those who deny Allah followed their own will.”

Unlike these and other verses in which the commentators provide an explanation for the function of the particle *bal*, such an explanation cannot be found in the verses presented above (page 177).

One can say that there is an additional function of *bal*, which is an asserative or emphasizing particle. This function, which is less common or less known has been occurred due to the comparison of the Hebrew particle *aval* (אבל) with the Arabic particle *bal*.

In his article “Hebrew and Semitic particles: comparative studies in Semitic philology” Eitan (1929) explains the difference between *bal* and *aval*:

“The current comparison of the latter (אבל) with the Arabic conj. بَلْ is certainly correct when applied to the adversative أَبَلْ ‘but’, ‘howbeit’, as it appears in the later books of the Bible (Ezra, Daniel, Chronicles) and in the general use of Mischnaic Hebrew, which is the only one preserved in the modern Hebrew [...]”.¹³

According to this paragraph, the particle *bal* functions only as an adversative particle, whereas the Hebrew particle *aval* has an additional function and is employed as an asseverative particle:

“However, the foregoing identification with Arab *bal* appears artificial when referring to the asserative أَبَلْ, ‘verily’, as it used in older Hebrew. Compare Gen. 17:19¹⁴, 1Kings 1:43¹⁵. This أَبَلْ ‘verily’, employed to introduce independent sentences with asseverative force, seems to differ both from the absolute Mish. أَبَل = Arab. بَلْ and from the adversative أَبَل ‘but’, ‘except that’, ‘howbeit’.”¹⁶

¹² Ṭabarī 1968, vol. 21, p. 40.

¹³ Eitan 1929, 206; see also Brockelmann 1963, vol. 2, p. 200.

¹⁴ “And God said, Sara thy wife shall bear thee a son indeed; and thou shalt call his name Yizhaq”

”וַיֹּאמֶר אֱלֹהִים אֲבָל שָׂרָה אֲשֶׁתְּךָ יֵלֶדְתְּ לְךָ בֶן וְקָרָאתָ אֶת שְׁמוֹ יִצְחָק.”

¹⁵ “And Yonatan answered and said to Adoniyahu, Alas but our lord king David has made Shelomo king.”

”וַיַּעַן יוֹנָתָן וַיֹּאמֶר לְאַדְנֵיהוּ אֲבָל אֲדֹנֵינוּ הַמֶּלֶךְ דָּוִד הַמְלִיךְ אֶת שְׁלֹמֹה.”

¹⁶ Eitan 1929, p. 206; see also Muraoka 1985, p. 129.

The emphatic force of *bal* exists in Ugaritic¹⁷ and in the Hebrew Bible.¹⁸ Yet it is possible to say that this use of *bal* exists also in the Qur'ān.

As mentioned above, according to the different translations and commentators on the Qur'ān, the particle *bal* has two functions that are very common in the Qur'ān:

1. To negate a preceding word or a sentence; in this case the particle *bal* can be translated as “nay”, “no” (*'istidrāk*).
2. To correct what previously has been mentioned or to denote digression; in this case the particle *bal* can be replaced with the particle *lākinna* and therefore can be translated as “but” (*'idrāb*).

As has already been explained, it would be rather artificial to translate *bal* as “nay” or “but” in the verses cited on page 177 because the sentences that followed the particle *bal* do not negate or reverse the preceding sentences. The correct translation or correct meaning of this particle should be “only” or “just.” It can be well argued that *bal* can also function as a restrictive particle that has an emphatic function. The main theme of the five verses cited on page 3 is Allah. The actions that are described in the clauses after the particle *bal* are restricted only to Allah.

Consider, for example, Sura 4 Verse 49:

أَلَمْ تَرَ إِلَى الَّذِينَ يُزَكُّونَ أَنْفُسَهُمْ بَلِ اللَّهُ يُزَكِّي مَن يَشَاءُ

'a-lam tara 'ilā lladīna yuzakkūna 'anfusahum bali llāhu yuzakkī man yašā'u

“Did you not regard those who purify themselves? Only God purifies, whom he will.”

The sentence following the particle *bal* is an independent sentence and *bal* has an emphatic function; therefore the translation of *bal* as “nay” is incorrect. *bal* starts a new sentence that aims to emphasize that only Allah can purify whom he will.

Another example is Sura 34 Vers 27:

قُلْ أَرُونِي الَّذِينَ أَلْحَقْتُمْ بِهِ شُرَكَاءَ كَلَّا بَلْ هُوَ اللَّهُ الْعَزِيزُ الْحَكِيمُ

qul 'arūniya lladīna 'alḥaqtum bihi šurakā'a kallā bal huwa llāhu l-'azīzu l-ḥakīmu

¹⁷ Wansbrough 1983, p. 531; see also Muraoka 1969, pp. 95–97; Sivan 1993, p. 123. According to Sivan D. *bal* has a positive meaning in rhetorical questions and when it has the suffix *t* (*blt*). See also: AArtun 1974, p. 66.

¹⁸ Muraoka 1969, p. 95–97; see also Waltke and O'Connor 1990, p. 671–672.

“Show me those you have joined to Allah as associates, by no means. Only he is the God the all-mighty, the all-wise”

The verse starts with a demand: “Show me those you have joined to Allah as associates.” which is followed by *kallā*, the particle of repelling or averting. As in the previous example, here too the particle *bal* starts a new sentence emphasizing the fact that there is one God, the all-mighty, the all-wise. A strengthening of the claim that *bal* and the sentence that follows it emphasize the idea of God’s oneness can be found in Ibn Kaṭīr’s commentary of Q 34:27:

وَقَوْلُهُ تَبَارَكَ وَتَعَالَى: «قُلْ أَرُونِي الَّذِينَ أَلْحَقْتُمْ بِهِ شُرَكَاءَ» أَيُّ أَرُونِي هَذِهِ الْأَلْهَةِ الَّتِي جَعَلْتُمُوهَا لِلَّهِ أَنْدَادًا (...) «كَلَّا» أَيُّ لَيْسَ لَهُ نَظِيرٌ وَلَا نَدِيدٌ وَلَا شَرِيكٌ وَلَا عَدِيلٌ (...) وَلِهَذَا قَالَ تَعَالَى: «بَلْ هُوَ اللَّهُ». أَيُّ الْوَاحِدِ الْأَحَدِ الَّذِي لَا شَرِيكَ لَهُ

wa-qawluhu tabāraka wa-ta’ālā: ‘qul ‘arūniya lladīna ‘alḥaqtum bihi šurakā’a’ ‘ay ‘arūnī ḥādīhi l-‘ālihata llatī ḡa’altumūha li-llāhi ‘andādan (...) ‘kallā’ ‘ay laysa lahu naẓīr wa-lā nadīd wa-lā ‘adīl wa-li-ḥādā qāla ta’ālā: ‘bal huwa llahu’. ‘ay l-wāḥid l-‘aḥad lladī lā šarik lahu (...)’¹⁹

“And the words of the Sublime: ‘Show me those you have joined to Allah as associates’, means show me the other gods which you set up to be compeers to God (...) Nay, Allah has no counterpart, or partner and no one is equal to him. For this reason, Allah said (it is written in the Qur’ān): ‘(only) he is the God’, *i.e.*, he is the one and the only God, who has no associate.”

The emphatic usage of the particle *bal* is also shown in Q 38:2, where *bal* starts a new sentence and it can be translated as “indeed” and not as in Arberry’s translation as “nay, but.”

ص وَالْقُرْآنِ ذِي الذِّكْرِ بَلِ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا فِي عِزَّةٍ وَشِقَاقٍ

§ (ṣād) *wa-l-qur’āni dī d-dikri balī lladīna kafarū fī ‘izzatin wa-šiḡāqin* (Q 38:1–2)

“By the Koran, containing the Remembrance – nay, but the unbelievers glory in their schism.”²⁰

Q 38:2 is also mentioned by Ibn Manẓūr when he considers the meaning and the functions of the particle *bal*. It is noteworthy that along with the

Waltke and O’Connor classify *aval* under “restrictive adverbs”. The category of these adverbs includes a range of particles which function as restrictive, exceptive, adversative or limitative entities. They can function as negative or emphatic particles.

¹⁹ Ibn Kaṭīr 1924, vol. 3, p. 538

²⁰ Arberry 1964, p. 464.

common functions of *bal*, he mentions that according to al-'Aḥfaṣ the particle *bal* in Q 38:2 has the meaning of the particle *'inna*, i.e., an emphatic particle. For this reason, verse 1 starts with an oath (*wa-l-qur'āni*):

wa qawluhu 'azza wa-ğalla: 'ş (şād) wa-l-qur'āni dī d-dikri bali lladīna kafarū fi 'izzatin wa-şiqāqin', qāla al-Aḥfaṣ 'an ba'dihim: 'inna bal hāhunā bi-ma'nā 'inna, fā-li-dalika şāra l-qasam 'alayha.²¹

It is hardly possible to find examples of emphatic *aval* in the biblical Hebrew or emphatic *bal* in the Qur'ān. The usage of *bl* as an emphatic particle existed in the Ugaritic and it is possible that this usage was retained in some places in the Hebrew Bible and later in the Qur'ān. We may conclude this discussion by saying that next to the common *bal* that negates or reverses the proposed noun or sentence, the particle *bal* has also another use which is rarely mentioned in the research literature. In the few verses in which this particle appears, it is used for starting a new sentence with an emphatic force, as Eitan describes it. In other words, *bal* is also an emphatic particle which is syntactically no different from other emphatic particles, such as *'inna* and *'innama*.

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²¹ Ibn Manẓūr, 1997, vol 1 p. 253.

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A New Witness of a Copto-Greek Hymn –*Poiekon*

Youhanna Nessim YOUSSEF

Senior Honorary Fellow, The University of Melbourne
Senior Researcher, The Australian Catholic University

53 Stanton Street

Doncaster

Victoria 3108

AUSTRALIA

E-mail: ynyoussef@hotmail.com

Abstract

*This article is the edition of an unpublished text of the collection of the Monastery al-Suriani. The article highlights the type of hymns and liturgical background of Upper Egypt, the extended in the Arabic tradition in the eighteenth century.**

Introduction

While preparing the concoction of the Myron,¹ according to the manuscript 106 Liturgy –Coptic Cairo Patriarchate, we found a special hymn that was recited during the procession of Palm Sunday.² The Manuscript was copied by Athanasius of Qus³ or one of his disciples from Upper-Egypt, hence it represents an Upper Egyptian tradition even if it narrates the ceremony in Saint Macarius Monastery.

* The author of this article would like to thank H. G. Bishop Matteos, abbot of the monastery of the Virgin Mary, known as al-Surian, for allowing him to study this fragment, and Father Bigoul, librarian of the monastery, who helped us to make the necessary photos. I am also grateful to Professor A. Sagona who corrected the English language.

¹ Youssef and Zanetti, (forthcoming)

² For the different types of processions cf. Youssef 2007, pp. 159–168. Viaud 1967–1968, pp. 211–226.

³ Youssef 2010, pp.171–180.

During a visit to the monastery of al-Muharraq, we found that the elder monks still use this hymn for the Vigil of the Nativity.⁴ This hymn is of Upper-Egyptian origin. It is in Greek with at Coptic Sahidic translation. In a visit to the monastery of Virgin Mary known as al-Surian, I came across the same hymn in fragments. This hymn is also copied in Paris Copte 68, fol. 47r-49r, which is originally from the White Monastery.⁵ Hence the importance of our manuscript as it is from Lower-Egypt, however reflecting an Upper Egyptian Tradition as we will see below.

As we may expect, this hymn is absent from the manuscripts in the Saint Macarius monastery,⁶ and Saint Bichoy monastery⁷ which are preserved in the Hamburg Library. In the fourteenth century, Shams al-Ryasaḥ Abu al-Barakāt Ibn Kabār⁸ did not mention this hymn in his Encyclopaedia *The Lamp of Darkness*.⁹

Originality of this hymn

This hymn is called in the manuscript 106 Lit. Patriarchal library in Arabic “*bāikān*” from the Greek loan-word ΠΟΗΙΚΟΝ and appeared twice in our edition.¹⁰ These kind of hymns appear several times in the Typika,¹¹ as father Zanetti noticed, Psalms are found everywhere in the Liturgy of Upper Egypt.¹² The name of this text is ΠΟΗΙΚΟΝ which means a composition by opposition to the psalms used as hymns. Each stanza could be divided into five strophes, while in the other liturgical hymns a stanza consists of only 4 strophes. This phenomenon is apparent in the Arabic text.¹³

The actual use of this hymn is during the communion of the Vigil of the Nativity;¹⁴ however we do not know the previous use. For example the hymn ΤΕΝΕΝ appeared in the manuscript Insinger N 32.¹⁵

⁴ Oral information from the cantor of the theological seminary of al-Muharraq. Thanks to Fr. Benjamin al-Muharraqi, who helped me in this interview.

⁵ For this manuscript cf. Timbie, 2008, pp. 169–178.

⁶ Störk 1996, pp. 650–663.

⁷ Burmester 1975, pp. 318 see index of subjects s.v. Nativity.

⁸ Khalil 1978, pp. 179–188. Khalil 2000, pp. 629–655. Wadi 2001, pp. 233–322.

⁹ Villecourt 1925, pp. 261–320 and especially p. 312–313.

¹⁰ Youssef and Zanetti, §174 and 429, as well as §232.

¹¹ The typika represent the liturgical reading according to the liturgical calendar with the beginning of the hymns cf. Atanassova 2010, pp. 123.

¹² Zanetti, 2008, pp. 201–210 and especially pp. 205–206.

¹³ See below.

¹⁴ For the Nativity in the Coptic Church cf. Giamberardini 1958, pp. 580.

¹⁵ Pleyte and Boeser 1897, p. 138.

Fol. 66.

ΤΗΝ ΝΗ ΟΘΕΝ ΘΥΣΙΑΝ ΚΑΙ ΤΗΝ ΛΟΓΙΓΗΝ
ΛΑΤΡΙΑΝ ΑΝΑΠΕΜΠΟΜΕΝ ΣΕ ΩΣ ΜΕΡΟΝ ΕΥΘ
ΔΙΑΣ ΠΡΟΣΔΕΞΗ ΣΩΤΗΡ ΗΜΩΝ

Let us offer to You today sacrifice
And reasonable service as odes to Your glory
O our Saviour

This hymn was reserved for the second Saturday of Lent (i.e. the Forty days = ΠΜΕΖCΝΑΥ 'ΝCΑΒΒΑΤΟΝ ΜΠΕΖΜΕ ΝΖΟΟΥ), and is actually recited during the month of Kihak. The modern editions of the psalmodia insert after the third ode (Dan 3: 52-58 LXX), however most of the manuscripts omit.¹⁶

It is important to mention that the manuscripts of the book of the *Church Order* have other hymns for the communion (which are edited by Bishop Samuel)¹⁷

Ms 73 Liturgy Coptic Patriarchate, dated 1160 AM (1444 AD)¹⁸

وقت التناول بعد الليلويا بلحن كيهك يقولوا مرد انجيل القداس وبعده الطرح
الواطس

During the communion after Alleluia with the Kihak tune, they recite the response of the mass and after that the Tarh¹⁹ tune Batos.²⁰

Manuscript of the Monastery Baramus dated 1230 AM (1514 AD)

ويكمل القداس كجاري العادة. ووقت تناول السراير المقدسة بعد الليلويا بلحن
كيهك تقال

Ω †TIMI 'NTE †XINEPBOKI.

ويقولوا ايضا الطرح الواطس الى اخر التسريح ينصرفوا بسلام من الرب آمين

He completes the liturgy as the custom and during the partaking of the holy mysteries after the Alleluia with the kihak tunes, it is said:

"Precious is the conceiving"

And they recite the tarh Batos until the end of the dismiss and then they go in the peace of the Lord.

¹⁶ Zanetti 1995, pp. 6594 and especially p. 88.

¹⁷ Samuel al-Suriani, 1984, Volume 2, p. 283.

¹⁸ Simaika, 1942, p. 339

¹⁹ For these hymns cf. Burmester 1937, pp. 78109, 505549.

²⁰ The tune, to which hymns, are sung on Wednesdays, Thursdays, Fridays and Saturdays. The name is taken from the first word of the verse of the theotokia for Thursday "Bush which Moses saw in the desert..."

Manuscript of the Archangel in Sabarbay, Tanta dated 1584 AM (1868 AD).

ووقت التوزيع بعد اسمو ابنودي يقرأوا اللحن في برمون الميلاد وهو

ΟΥΥΥΙΟΥ²¹ αϥϥαι ϯΕΝ ΝΙΜΑΝϥαι

وبرلكسه

αΥΕ‘ΙΝΙ²² ΝΕϥ²³ ‘ΝΖΑΝΔΩΡΟΝ

During the partaking after the smou ebnoude²⁴ they read the hymn of the paramone of the glorious nativity, which is:

“A star appeared in the East.”

And its paralexis is:

“They will offer Him *presents*”

Amazing enough that this edition, that refers to two manuscripts from Dayr al-Surian did not include any special rite for the partaking of the communion.

The manuscript of Dayr al-Surian (S)

These fragments are written around the 14-15th century AD there is a foliotation in Coptic lettering on the recto.

17x12 cm,

One column, titles in red ink in Arabic, 13 lines/page.

Contents of the manuscript

Fol.1-2r	doxology Adam for Saint Shenoute	Glorifications ²⁵
Fol. 2r-4r	hymn for St Peter	Glorifications ²⁶
Fol. 4v-5r	hymn for the archangel Michael	unpublished
Fol. 5v-7v	for the entry of the Virgin Mary to the temple.	Difnar ²⁷
Fol. 8r-9r	hymn for Saint Pichoi	Glorifications ²⁸
Fol. 9v-11r	hymn for Saint Philotheus	Glorifications ²⁹

²¹ Read ΟΥΥΥΙΟΥ

²² Read ΕΥΕΙΝΙ

²³ Read ΝΑϥ

²⁴ praise the Lord ϥΜΟΥ ΕΦ†

²⁵ Youssef 2008, pp. 179200 especially p. 188-190.

²⁶ Youssef, 2009, pp. 127137.

²⁷ Innemée and Youssef 2007, pp. 6985.

²⁸ Attallah Arsenius al-Moharraqi 1972, pp. 313315.

²⁹ Attallah Arsenius al-Moharraqi, 1972, pp. 343344.

Fol. 11r-12r	Greek/Coptic hymn ΚΥΡΙΕ ΤΟΝ ΚΥΡΙΟΝ ΒΑ(ΣΙ)ΛΙΕ ΤΟΥ ΒΑΣΙΛΕΟΝ ΙC ΧΥ ΦΥΛΑΝΘΡΟΠΟΝ ΔΩΠ ΕΡΟQ	unpublished
Fol. 12r-	Paralexis for the Resurrection ΚΑΤΑ ΝΙΧΟΡΟΣ ΝΕΜ ΝΙΤΑΞΙC	Diaconal ³⁰
Fol. 13	Lacuna	
Fol. 14	Hymn for the resurrection Ω ΝΙΜ ΝΑΙ CΥΜΦΩΝΙΑ	Diaconal ³¹
Fol. 15-16	Hymn for the resurrection ‘ΝΩΩΡΠ ‘ΜΦΟΥΑΙ ΝΤΕ ΝΙCΑΒΒΑΤΟΝ	Unpublished
Fol. 16v-	Greek Prayer for the midnight service	Unpublished
Fol. 17	Lacuna	
Fol. 18-20	Hymn for Nativity	Published hereafter
Fol. 21r-22r	The second stanza of the hymn for the three young Hebrew ΤΕΝΕΝ	Diaconal/ ³² Psalmodia
Fol. 22r-23r	Hymn for the Virgin	published ³³
Fol. 23	For the glorification of the martyrs and the saints. ΠΕΝΘC ΠΕΝΘC	Unpublished but recorded in the rite of Glorification by Ragheb Mofteh

There is a note for the reader in Arabic in fol. 18r

اذكر يا رب عبد الخاطي المسكين الغارق في بحر الخطايا والذنوب الذي لا
يستحق ان يدعا بسم الولد عبد السيد ابن المرحوم حسب الله اذكره يا رب في
الفردوس للنعيم

Remember o Lord, Your poor sinner servant, sunk in the sea of sins and transgressions, who is not worthy to be called by name, ‘Abd al-Sayid (the servant of the Lord) son of the late Hassaballah. Remember him, O Lord in the paradise of Joy.

اذكر يا رب عبدك الخاطي المسكين الغارق في بحر الخطايا والذنوب الذي لا
يستحق ان يدعا اسم الولد
اذكر يا رب عبدك الخاطي

Remember o Lord, Your poor sinner servant, sunk in the sea of sins and transgressions, who is not worthy to be called by name,

³⁰ Attalla Arsénius al-Moharraqqi 1973, p. 383.

³¹ Ibid.

³² Attalla Arsénius al-Moharraqqi, 1973, pp. 620–621.

³³ Quecke 1970, pp. 432–435.

We will compare our version with the Ms 106 Lit, Patriarchal library
(in the margin P)

Text

قطعة رومي تقرأ في أوقاتها

ασθερ μεκε εφονε φασιληοϋς
ιπρογεογονον κε γε πασιε φηλε
τεϋτε προσκениσοϋμεν τεϋτε
κθαθα επι ρις

πεκσιου αφοϋωνη³⁵ ενιμαγος³⁶
περρο³⁷ τζα³⁸ ννιενεζ ογ³⁹
νιηλη τηροϋ μпкаζ* αμοιτε⁴⁰
ντερτεν⁴¹ ντενοϋωϋτ μπενταϋ-
μαςϥ ριτωεμ⁴² πκαζ
φληπι μαγι το ταγμα ζοιν
ενατελοϋζοι μαζιν αϣτα τωρι
θεος μνονθες ετεκ δοξα ci αγια

νιμαγος χωϋτ⁴⁴ επωφηρε⁴⁵
φονη⁴⁶ νταϣτϋωϋ⁴⁷ ε⁴⁸ νιμεγος⁴⁹
νναιτορον^{50*} ναϥ ευζος⁵¹ πνοϋτε
πενταϣετϋποκ⁵² χε ποϋ⁵³ νακ
πετβαϥ⁵⁴

Translation

A Greek peace to be read in due time³⁴

Α'στηρ μάγοις ἐφάφη, βασιλεὺς πρὸ αἰώνων.
Καί γε πᾶσαι φυλαὶ δεῦτε προσκηνήσωμεν
τῷ τεθεντι τῷ ἐπὶ γῆς

A star appeared to the Magi, King before
ages, all tribes come worship that who was
born on earth.

Your star appeared to these *Magi*. King
before ages. O all *tribes of the earth*⁴³ come
and worship who was born on the surface
of the earth

Ἐβλεπον οἱ μάγοι τὸ θαῦμα ζωὴν ἀνατέλ-
λουσιν. οἱ μάγοι αὐτῷ δῶρα, Θεὸν ὑμνοῦντες
ἔδωκαν. Δόξα σοι, ἅγιε.

The Magi saw the miracle, the life arose.
The Magi offered to him present praying
God, Glory be to You, O Holy.

These *magi* saw the marvel, Life blossoms.
These *magi* gave to Him their *presents*
praising who was born, Glory to You,
O Holy.

³⁴ The Greek version is done by R. F. U. Zanetti as it will appear in the edition of the
Ms 106 Lit.

³⁵ P αφοϋωνηζϥ

³⁶ Unless it is an influence from Bohairic, **NI** is considered as a demonstrative in Sahidic

³⁷ P. π'ρρο

³⁸ P. ετζαθη

³⁹ P. ω

⁴⁰ P. αμηιτν

⁴¹ P. τηρτῃ

⁴² P ριχμ

⁴³ Not in Greek, perhaps added to maintain the tunes?

⁴⁴ P. βωτ

⁴⁵ P ετϣπηρε

⁴⁶ P πωνη

⁴⁷ P. τϋωϋ

⁴⁸ P. α

⁴⁹ P. νιμαγος

⁵⁰ P. νεϥαωρον

⁵¹ P. ευζως

⁵² P. πενταϣποϥ

⁵³ P. πωϋ

⁵⁴ P. πετοϥααβ

ΙC⁵⁵ ἰ ταπρθενοῦ⁵⁶ νταςβο⁵⁷ αβο⁵⁸
 πνοῦτε πενταφερρομε⁵⁹ πνοῦτε
 πλογοc αqωε⁶⁰ ναq⁶¹ οὔνοq⁶²
 ἔμμεcθῖριον⁶³ πε πεταψφο⁶⁴
 μμανοῦηλ
 ἰτοῦ παρθενοῦ θεκοῦcα κε θεον
 ανενoc λογoc θεoc ανε*τλεν
 μεγαθον μεcθῖριον θῖν θοῦκοῦ
 ἔμμανοῦηλ

ναoc κc κε γοῦμεν ξῖνον θηοῦ
 μα θοῦτον φοῖλ εζαῦθεε παcα
 εqλῖcθῖc ἰc μακανῖcοῦμεν
 εqθου

οὔερπ⁶⁵ φνοῦτε⁶⁶ πενταqωπε⁶⁷
 οqωφηρε⁶⁸ πε πῖαγμα
 πενταqεοq⁶⁹*νητηq⁷⁰ ο⁷¹
 νῖφλη⁷² τηροῦ ἔμπαq μακαρίζῖν⁷³
 μμοοῦ⁷⁴
 ρεπτοc ντοῦ ααρων cῖν θεοῦ
 εχεννῖτωοῦ ταλαc κραθoc
 cῖνλοῦcα ηποῦτων μεγον φρηῖον
 τεῦτε προcκενῖcοῦμεν

Behold the *Virgin* gave birth and God became man. God the *Word* appeared to us. Great is the mystery of the birth of Emmanuel

ἰδου παρθένοc τεκοῦcα καὶ Θεοc ἐν ἀνθρώποιc·
 Λογοc θεοc ἀνέτειλεν. Μέγα τὸ μυστήριον τοῦ
 τόκου Ἐμμανουήλ.

Behold, the Virgin bringing forth et God among men: God the Word appeared, great is the mystery of the birth of Emmanuel.

Ναὸc κυρίου γέγονεν, ξένον τὸ θαῦμα τοῦτο.

Ὁ ἐν βουλῇ ἐξαύτης αὐτῆc, πᾶσαι αἱ φυλαὶ
 τῆc γῆc, μακαρίζωμεν αὐτόν

(Virgin) Became a temple of God, strange is this miracle. That who became voluntary from her, all tribes of the earth let us proclaim Him as Blessed

She became a temple <of> God. Admirable is the *miracle*. Who dwelt in her. O all *tribes* of the earth bless them (Jesus/ God and the Virgin)

Ἐαβδοc τοῦ Ἀαρὼν σὺν Θεῷ ἐγενετο, τοὺc
 κλάδοuc συνελοῦcα ὑπο τῶν μάγων Ἑβραίων.
 Δεῦτε προσκυνήσωμεν.

The stuff of Aaron being with God, collecting under the effect of the magi Hebrew, come and worship Him

⁵⁵ P. εἰc

⁵⁶ P. τηπαρθενoc

⁵⁷ P. νταςqπο

⁵⁸ P. αῖω

⁵⁹ P. νταqῖρρωμε

⁶⁰ P. αqωα

⁶¹ P. ναν

⁶² P. οὔνοb

⁶³ P. μμῦcτηριον

⁶⁴ P. πεqπο

⁶⁵ P. οὔερπε

⁶⁶ P. πνοῦτε

⁶⁷ The three witness BN 68, P., S. have the same reading, while it should be read πεν-

ταcωπε

⁶⁸ P. οὔωπηρε

⁶⁹ P. πενταqοῦωω εοῦωz

⁷⁰ P. νητηc

⁷¹ P. ω

⁷² P. νῖφλην

⁷³ P. μακαρίζε

⁷⁴ P. μμοq

Commentary

The comparison between the P. and S. shows clearly that P. is by far better than S.

Arabophone (by this late date) Copts are using the Greek in an idiosyncratic way. The point is to observe and understand this inner-Egyptian development, not just (as formerly) to remark on “mistakes” or “deviations” from the “standard” biblical or liturgical Greek.⁷⁵

We note several examples of “Bohairicization”⁷⁶ of the Sahidic dialect such as **επωφηρε** instead of **επωπηρε**

Often the words are spelt phonetically and are hardly discernable such as **ζιτωεμ** instead of **ζιχμ**.

In the “Bohairicization” the loan Greek verb **μακαριζε** (Sahidic) became **μακαριζιν**⁷⁷ without adding the **ερ** of the Bohairic dialect. A detailed study of this variation would be very useful for phonetics.

There is another stanza in the P.

“Light from light, appeared, we are full of joy, let us sing with the magi,
“Unfaithful, believe in the advent of Christ.

The liturgical context is amazing, while the P. is a procession for Palm Sunday; the BN68 is “a series of instructions to worshippers”. The use of S is not clear, lying between glorifications of saints Shenute, Pichoi commemoration of the Resurrection. We are inclined to adopt the use of al-Muharraq as a hymn for the vigil of Nativity feast.

The composition of Abu al-Sa’ad

This hymn was very popular in the eighteenth century, so Abu al-Sa’ad from Abu Tig⁷⁸ composed an acrostic Arabic hymn on this hymn.

أنا أول كلامي اصبح السلام	The beginning of my speech, is hail
لفخر الآنام وبدر التمام	To the pride of human and full moon
أنا ألقى إهتمامي بطول الدوام	I permanently place my cares
على البكر مريم وبها استجير	Upon Virgin Mary who helps quickly
وابيح وأتكلم بما في الضمير	I reveal and speak what in my conscience

⁷⁵ On bad Greek and case-and verb-endings see Fewster 2002, pp. 220–246 here p. 233–236.

⁷⁶ Lefort, 1931, pp. 115–135.

⁷⁷ Gregorios 2001, pp. 61–88.

⁷⁸ Graf 1951, p. 125.

بماذا أتكلّم وبماذا أقول
 أكلّ ولا أعلم بسرّ البتول
 حبل مرثريم يفوق العقول
 وشرحه عجيبا علينا عسير
 ومن كان لبيبا نطق باليسير
 تنبأ عليها النبي حزقيال
 واهدى اليها سلامه وقال
 يأتي اليها يسوع ذو الجلال
 وهو ربها العزيز القدير
 الذي قد احبها من قبل ان تصير
 جميع الغرائب وكلّ الفنون
 عقول اللباب بها لم يدركون
 يا أهل العجايب لا تتعجبون
 ما هو العجب ان ربا قدير
 في البطن انتجب مثل طفل صغير
 حينئذ لما صلب وأنتهر
 مات بالارادة وقام بالسحر
 فمن أجل هذا يا بني البشر
 تعلوا ورفعوا من عمق بير
 جهنم فرجعوا إلى فردوس منير
 خلاص البرية من قبل
 بتول مصطفية التي هي جبل
 صهيون النقية وسرّ الحبل
 على فكر قلبي وقاق
 الضمير
 وليس عند ربي أمر عسير
 دعيت صديقة موسى الكليم
 نطق في العيقة بأمر عظيم
 وقال بالحقيقة أن الله يقيم
 إليكم نبيا كمثلي نذير
 خلقكم بديا وإليه المسير
 رآك عوسج أخضر وفيه نار تقيد
 فصار في تحير وعجب شديد
 وجاء البعض وفسر ما هو عتيد
 وقال إن هذا لمريم شهير
 وأكرز ونادى يوحنا البشير
 زمانى جميعه وأنا في المديح

What should I say and what can I utter
 I will be tired and I would not comprehend
 the mystery of the Virgin. The conceiving of
 Mary is above understanding
 Its explanation is mysterious and very hard to
 us even for the wise that is able to talk easily.
 Ezekiel the prophet spoke about her
 He greeted her with peace and said:
 " Jesus, to whom is the glory- will come
 He is her mighty and capable Lord
 He loved her before her birth
 All the wonders and all the arts
 Even the mind of the wise men did not
 comprehend it. O people of wonders do not
 wonder what is wonderful that the almighty
 Lord in the womb to be born as a Child
 So when He was crucified and rebuked
 He died by His (own will and rose up at
 dawn, therefore, O son of men you are
 elevated and taken from the depth of Hades
 (which is) hell and returned back to the
 Paradise of light.
 The salvation of the creation is from the
 chosen Virgin who is the Mount
 Zion the pure and her conceiving is
 mysterious. Above my mind and my
 conscience, but nothing is impossible for my
 Lord.
 You are called the friend of Moses who
 talked (with God) he spoke an amazing thing
 about the bush, and he truly said that God
 dwelt in, and a prophet like me will come to
 you as a harbinger. He created you in the
 beginning and to whom you will go
 He (Moses) saw you as a green bush with
 flames. He became amazed and extremely
 marvelled. Some people came and interpreted

ولم أستطيع لكني ابيح
 بسري جميعه لام المسيح
 وأكون المبشر بها والنذير
 ومهما تيسر قليل من كثير
 سليمان أجابك يقول في النشيد
 أختي مرحبا بك وأنا لك أريد
 روايح ثيابك كعنبر يقيد
 حقا قد اتكلم يوحنا البشير
 على البكر مريم كلاما كثير
 شهد وقال أمس رأيت امرأة
 بهية بلباس في ضياء
 مشتمله بشمس وقمر حدادة
 واثني عشر عشر نجم
 عليها تنير
 وحبلت ووضعت غلاما صغير
 صحيح إن هذا الكلام المقول
 اما القمر فهو يوحنا البتول
 والاثني عشر نجم هم الإثني عشر
 رسول
 الشمس المحيطة هو الإبن
 الضغير
 ذي قدرة بسيطة وربما قدير
 ضميري وفكري تعلق بك
 وطول عمري لم أرى مثلك
 لكني لعمري أقول إنك
 كمثل صور حائط وحصنا
 كبير
 حائط وحاجز وحصنا حصين
 طلبنا وجدنا بلوغ المراد
 هدينا وصرنا لبر الرشاد
 لأننا آمننا بكل إعتقاد
 وصرنا أهل طاعة ونحمل
 النير
 يسوع بإستطاعة وشعباً منير
 ظهر منك الكلمة وسر عظيم
 ولاهوت وناسوت وجوهر كريم
 وصرت كتابوت العهد القديم

what will happen. This is a known (symbol)
 of Mary. John the Evangelist spoke and
 preached.
 All my life, I glorify
 And I could not refrain, I must reveal
 The mystery of the Mother of Christ
 I will be her preacher and herald
 To what I can do little or many
 Solomon replied and said in the Songs
 "My sister, welcome to you, I long
 The aroma of your clothes is like burning
 amber
 Truly, John the Evangelist, spoke about the
 Virgin Mary in many words
 He testified saying: "I saw, yesterday, a lady
 with full bright clothes, clothed with the sun
 and the moon under her feet
 Twelve starts shining around her
 She conceived and gave birth to a young
 babe.
 This speech, said, is true
 The moon is John the chaste
 The twelve starts are the twelve apostles
 The sun surrounding her is the young Son
 Who has the a simple act, the mighty Lord
 My conscience and my mind are attached to
 you. I have never seen anyone like you. But I
 always say that you are like a surrounding
 fence and great fortress, a preventing fence
 and a safe fortress.
 We asked to reach the purpose. Guide us to
 arrive to wise righteousness. For we believed
 with all understanding.
 We became obedient carrying the yoke
 Of Jesus the Mighty one to his enlightened
 people
 The Verb appeared from you, in a great

الذي من خشب لا
يسوس
المطلي بالذهب المكسي بالحرير
عليت وصرت في سماء الإله
وقد إرتفعت لأنك سماه
الحق فقت جميع اصفياه
وصرت منارة وضوءك منير
ومدحك تجارة وربحه كثير
غلاما وضعت وهو اللي انشاك
وطفلا حملت حل بين يداك
تألم حزنتي كعاجز وذاك
له الملك وحده ولا له
نظير
الكل بيده الغني والفقير
فلو كان مدادي كنيل الفرات
واوارقي كوادي عظيم الصفات
وأقلامي تحاكي جميع النبات
وأمكنك لهذا زمانا كبير
من الرمل ماذا يشيل البعير
قديمًا بذاته قوي لا يحول
نزل من سماه لبطن البتول
وكانت آياته تفوق العقول
بعلمه تطلع وعرف الضمير
وابراً المخلع وحمل السرير
كثير عجائب يسوع المسيح
عقول اللباب بها لم تبيح
قبل كل تايب وأقام السطح
وابراً السقيم واشفي
الكسبح
وابراً المعتري من الروح الشرير
لعمرى مثالك ووصفك بعيد
وطول المسالك لنحوه شديد
وكوني اصف ذلك وكوني وحيد
ولا لحلمي طاقة لجحد
المسير
قطعت المسافه ولا لي خبير

mystery. Honourable essence, Divinity and Humanity. You became like to ark of the Old Testament

Made with wood that would not decay and covered with gold and clothed in silk.

You were exalted and became heaven for God. And you are exalted as His Heaven.

And truly you surpassed all His chosen.

You became a candelabrum with great light

Your praise is commerce with great profit.

You gave birth to that Who created you. You

carried Him as a babe in your hands. He

suffered and you mourned as powerless and

unable. To whom only is the kingdom and nobody resembles to Him.

He holds all the rich and the poor.

And if my ink is as the river (Nile) of

Euphrates and my papers like a noble great valley, and pens similar to all plants.

And if I continue this age and more than sands that camels cannot carry (I would not be able to complete my task)

Eternal in His essence, Mighty and

Unchangeable. He descended to the Virgin's

Womb. His miracles were beyond

understanding. By His knowledge is able to

discern the conscience and He healed the

paralytic who carried his bed.

Many are the wonders of Jesus Christ. The

minds of the wise men cannot comprehend.

He received all the repentant and raised the

dead. He healed the sick, the paralytic and

the possessed by the evil spirit.

Your type and description is really hard⁷⁹ and

the long ways toward Him are harsh.

I may describe that, being alone, and I do not

⁷⁹ Lit far away.

مريم أنت سموت سماء العلوم
 بهذا دعيتي واسمك حلو
 ويعجز حديثي عن وصفك ولو
 من أول زماني لليوم الاخير
 يعجز لساني ودهري قصير
 نزولي براحة لبحر العلوم
 وجدته إباحة عظيم الرسوم
 ولا اقدر سباحة ولا اعرف أعوم
 ولا لي سفينة تجوز الغزير
 كي أصل لمينا السلام وأصير
 ها الإله الحقيقي صلب فوق عود
 وإحتمل بالحقيقة أفتراء اليهود
 يالهذا الجسارة يالهذا الجحود
 يال هذه الخطية ليس لها
 نظير
 سقوه المرارة خلا وخمير
 لأنه تقدم جانا بأقتضاع
 والتلميذ يهوذا أسلمه وباع
 قبل التألم بغير إمتناع
 قام وصعد وحطم متاريس
 الجحيم
 واخرج آدم من الزمهرير
 يفوق الطبيعة وصف أم الإله
 وهي مستطبعة حداه
 أيتها الشفيعة في يوم اللقاء
 أبو السعد عبدك ذليل
 وحقير
 منتظر لوعدك كوني لي نصير
 السلام لك وواجب علينا السلام
 من أهل المراتب كبار المقام
 وكل أب طالب لنا بالدوام
 بطريرك وأسقف وكاهن
 مشير
 والشعب جميعه كبير مع صغير

have enough energy to go seriously forward.
 I go further for a distance while I am not
 expert.
 Mary, you are above the highest heaven. This
 you were called and your name is sweet.
 My speech is unable to describe you, even
 from my first days to the last. My tongue is
 incapable and my time is short.
 I went slowly in the sea of knowledge. I
 found that it a difficult journey. I cannot
 swim and I do not know how to float, I do
 not have a ship to go through the deep so that
 I may reach the harbour of peace and be
 (there)
 The true God was crucified on the cross. And
 truly endured the lies of the Jews.
 How do they dare and what a denial
 What is this unparalleled sin. They gave Him
 gall, vinegar and wine.
 For He preceded to come humbly to us.
 Judas the disciple delivered Him and
 betrayed.⁸⁰ He accepted suffering without
 objection. He rose, ascended and crushed the
 gates of Hades. He took out Adam from Hell.
 The description of the Mother of God is
 above nature, she is capable in front of Him.
 O intercessor, in the meeting day
 Abu al-Sa'd is you poor humble servant.
 Waiting for your promise so be my defender.
 Hail to you- our duty is to praise-
 From all high ranked people
 And every father asking for us long life
 Patriarch, bishop and priest giving advice
 And all the laymen, elders and young

⁸⁰ Lit sold Him

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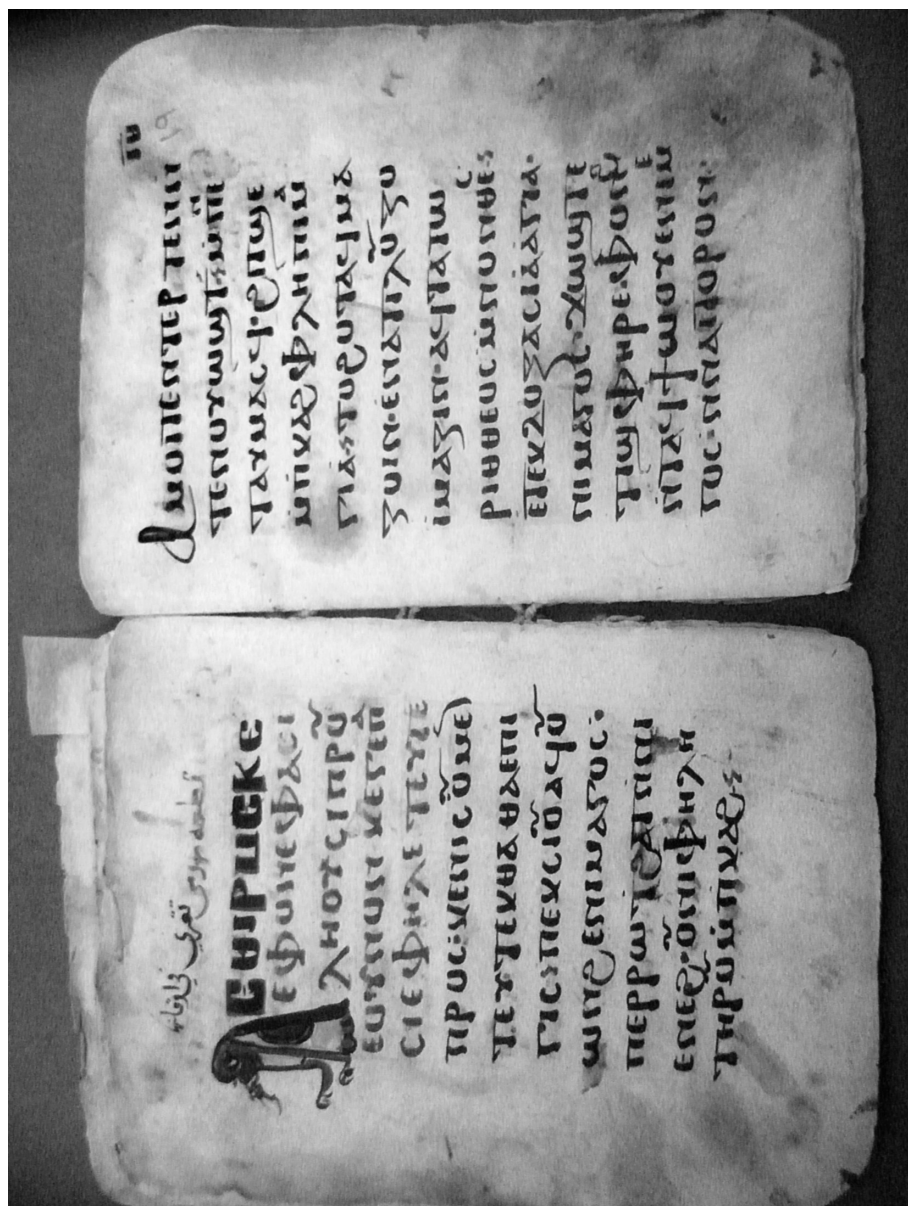


Fig. 1.

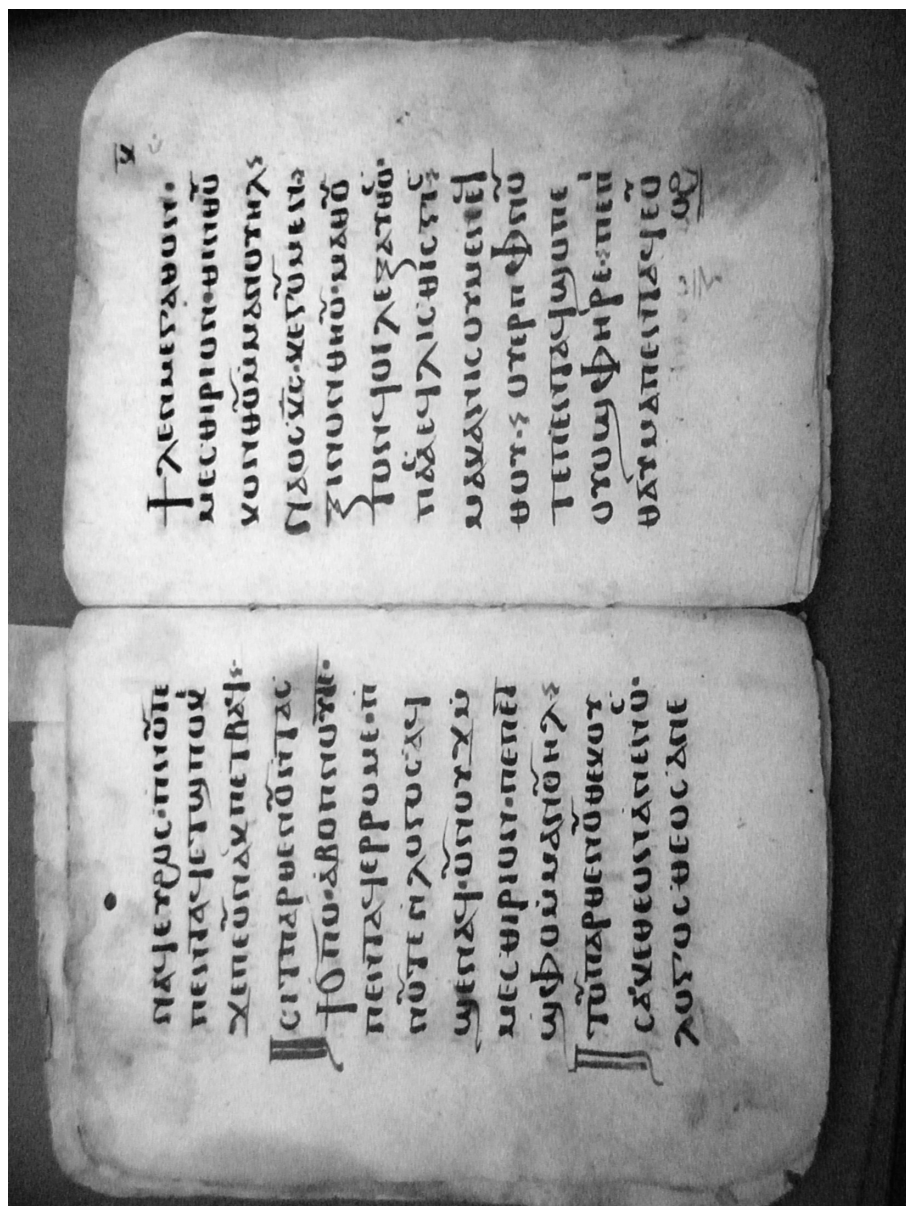


Fig. 2.

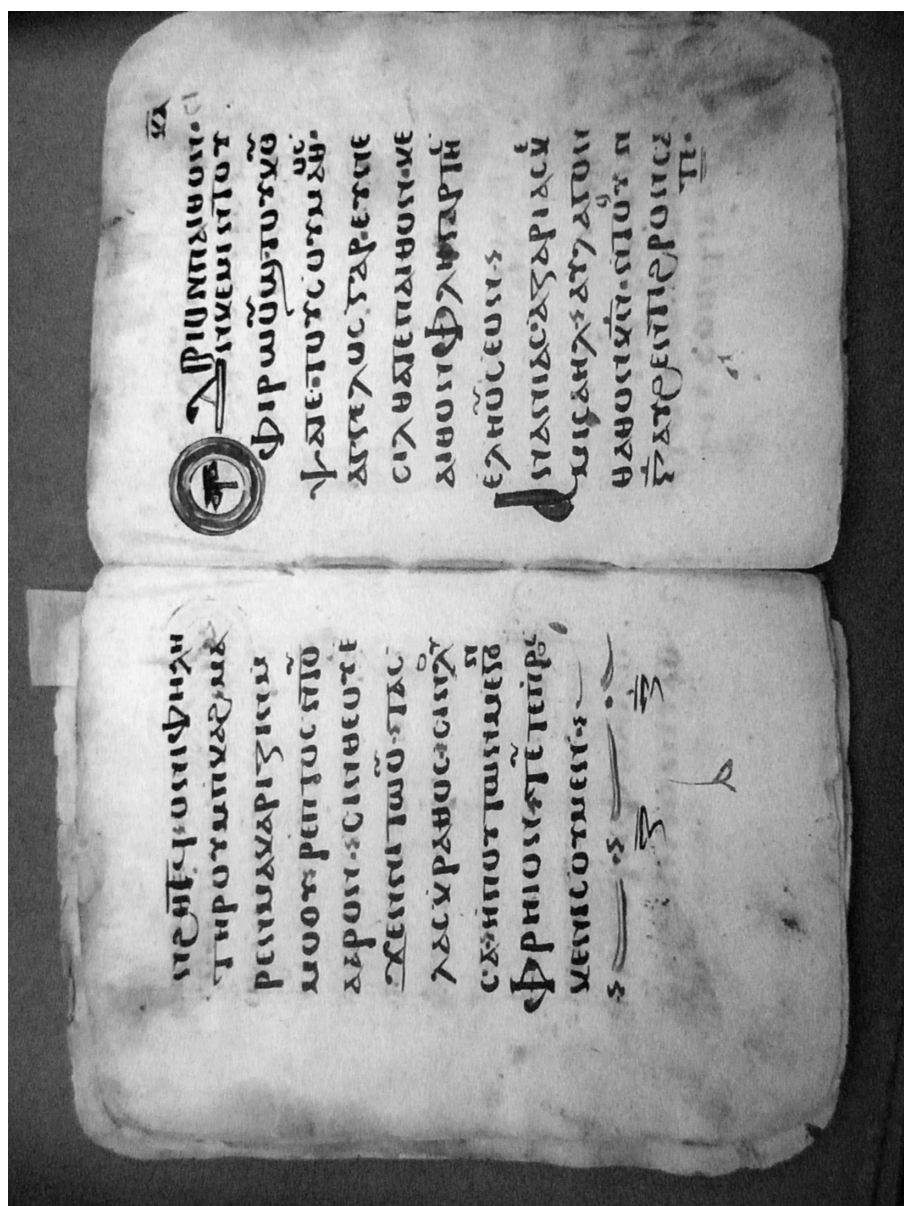


Fig. 3.

The Prophet Ṣāliḥ and ‘Alī b. Abī Ṭālib

Khalid SINDAWI

Department of Multidisciplinary Studies
Head of Middle Eastern Studies Unit
The Max Stern Academic College of Emek Yezreel
Emek Yezreel 19300
ISRAEL
Fax: + 972 4 6980667
E-mail: khalids@yvc.ac.il

Abstract

In this paper we compare the prophet Ṣāliḥ and his she-camel with ‘Alī b. Abī Ṭālib, in light of various Shī‘ite sources such as “stories of the prophets”, ḥadīth literature, Islamic jurisprudence and Qur’ān exegesis. In Shī‘ite lore the great chronological gap between the two is ignored, and ‘Alī is depicted as possessing many of Ṣāliḥ’s attributes, out of a desire to bolster the former’s status and endow his personality with sanctity. ‘Alī is thus represented as partaking of the prophet Ṣāliḥ’s distinguished characteristics and, just like him, is of holy progeny. Shī‘ite writers used the connection between the two personalities in order to convince doubters of ‘Alī’s right to the Imamate, to demonstrate that his status is no less than that of a prophet, and to prove the antiquity of the Shī‘ite creed.

Keywords: the prophet Ṣāliḥ, Ṣāliḥ’s she-camel, ‘Alī b. Abī Ṭālib, Imām, succession (*wilāya*), authority (*waṣiyya*).

Introduction

According to the Shī‘ite view every prophet has an executor (*waṣiyy*), and that the Imāms are the inheritors of the prophets and their executors.¹ This inheritance was passed on in unbroken succession from one prophet and executor to another, until it reached the Prophet Muḥammad, who bequeathed it to the Imām ‘Alī b. Abī Ṭālib, from whom it passed on again in succession until the twelfth Imām.

¹ For more details on this issue see, for example: Rubin 1979, pp. 41–65.

Shī'ism has taken numerous biographical details in the lives of the prophets and their executors and ascribed them to the Imāms, in order to turn the latter into holy men and to convince the believers of their right to the succession of the Imamate. To take just a few examples, numerous attributes and biographical details belonging to 'Īsā (Jesus),² and also to the prophet Yaḥyā (John the Baptist),³ have been transferred to al-Ḥusayn b. 'Alī, while characteristics originally ascribed to Joshua Bin Nun, Moses' "executor", have been transferred to 'Alī b. Abī Ṭālib, despite the vast chronological gulf which separates the prophets and their executors from the Shī'ite Imāms.

In fact, the Shī'a claims that its roots go back thousands of years into the past. The attribution of similar or identical characteristics to ancient prophets and more recent Imāms serves as evidence for its antiquity and for the validity of its creed of succession. Shī'ism, in its own view, thus existed long before it appeared on the stage of history, despite the more accepted contrary opinion.

Another possible motive for claiming that the Imāms have inherited the succession of the prophets and their executors can be traced to the struggle against injustice and falsehood which was the main mission of the prophets and executors, and which the twelve Imāms continued. The Imāms are thus conceived as engaged in the same divine revolutionary activities as God's prophets and messengers, for the purpose of establishing social justice. 'Alī b. Abī Ṭālib, as an Imām and the executor of the Prophet Muḥammad, is deemed the inheritor of the prophets' way and their justice. Since he epitomizes the struggle for righteousness and the fight against injustice, it is no wonder that he is compared with the prophet Ṣāliḥ, with whom he has much in common.

A comparison of the prophet Ṣāliḥ with 'Alī b. Abī Ṭālib can shed light on an important issue, to wit the extent to which the traditions of ancient Shī'ism were derived from "stories of the prophets", a genre which provided a rich source of attributes of prophets which were unabashedly reformulated as attributes of the twelve Imāms.

Numerous examples of this can be seen in the Imāms' biographies as reported in various Shī'ite sources. However, so far this issue has received only very scant and superficial scholarly attention.

The present study focuses on the similarities between the story of the prophet Ṣāliḥ and the miracle of his she-camel, and 'Alī b. Abī Ṭālib, as

² For more details see our study: Sindawi 2007, pp. 44, 50–65.

³ For more details see our study: Sindawi 2004b, pp. 78 (3), 37–54.

found in Shīʿite sources, especially in the “stories of the prophets” literature, collections of traditions, and contemporary studies.

The main sources used for this study are the following: *Baṣāʾir al-darajāt* by al-Ṣaffār al-Qummī (d. 290/902); *Tafsīr al-ʿAyyāshī* by al-ʿAyyāshī (d. 320/932); *al-Khiṣāl* and *ʿUyūn akhbār al-riḍā* by Shaykh al-Ṣadūq (d. 381/991); *ʿArāʾis al-majālis* by al-Thaʿlabī (d. 427/1035); *al-Tahdhīb* by al-Ṭūsī (d. 460/1067); *Qīṣaṣ al-anbiyāʾ* by al-Bayāḍī al-Nabbāʾī (d. 877/1472); *Bihār al-anwār* by al-Majlisī (d. 1110/1698); *Qīṣaṣ wa-mawālīd al-anbiyāʾ* by al-Kisāʾī (d. 1234/1818); *The Divine Guide in Early Shīʿism* by Amir Moezzi. Before we proceed to examine the similarities between the two personalities, a short introduction to the story of the prophet Ṣāliḥ is in order.

A brief account of the story of the prophet Ṣāliḥ⁴

When Ṣāliḥ attained the age of forty God he was inspired by God to call on the tribe of Thamūd to obey God. But the people of Thamūd said to him that if he wanted to be believed he should bring a pregnant she-camel out of a rock and have it give birth to a young camel. Ṣāliḥ prayed to God, whereupon the rock split and from it emerged a very large, well-proportioned she-camel which kneeled before them and gave birth to a large camel like its mother. Ṣāliḥ then asked his people to divide their water so that they would have it one day, and the she-camel the next day. On the day of the she-camel they had enough to drink from its milk, but on their day the she-camel did not get any water. They then begrudged the she-camel also what it drank on its own day and conspired to kill it. The person chosen to carry out their plan was Qudār b. Ṣālīf. The she-camel was killed and on the fourth day God’s punishment was visited on them; the people were all killed and Ṣāliḥ’s she-camel (also known as “God’s she-camel” or “the first she-camel”)⁵ was resurrected. In the wake of this affair the killer’s name

⁴ The story of the prophet Ṣāliḥ appears in the Qurʾān in a number of places, as follows:

A. God sends the prophet Ṣāliḥ to his people: Q 7:73, 73; 11:61; 26:141–145, 146–151; 27:45–47.

B. Ṣāliḥ’s people do not believe in his message: Q 7:75–76; 11:62–63; 26:153–154.

C. The she-camel sent as a miracle to Ṣāliḥ from heaven: 7:73; 11:64; 17:59; 26:154–156; 54:27–28; 91:11–13.

D. The she-camel is killed and the people of Thamūd are punished: 7:77–79; 11:65–68; 25:38–39; 26:156–158; 27:29–31; 69:4–5; 85:17–20; 89:9–14; 91:11–15.

The story of Ṣāliḥ appears in numerous other sources as well, such as the “stories of the prophets”, historical chronicles, and more.

⁵ For more details on the she-camel’s epithets see, for example: al-Thaʿālibī 1977, 29, 45, 352.

entered proverbial usage as an example for misfortune, calamity and extinction.⁶

The similarities between the stories of the prophet ṢāliḤ and 'Alī b. Abī Ṭālib

A careful examination of Shī'ite sources reveals a number of attributes which the two share. In all likelihood Shī'ite authors perused the prophet ṢāliḤ's biography, which they found to contain details which could be reformulated so as to fit in with the beliefs of the Shī'ite public and enhance the aura of sanctity surrounding 'Alī as a member of a sacred family.

Before discussing these similarities in detail, we should note that in addition to the likeness between ṢāliḤ and 'Alī, there are also similarities between ṢāliḤ's she-camel and 'Alī. We found eight points of similarity between the two men, and seven between the camel and 'Alī, as will be explained in the following pages.

The similarities between 'Alī and ṢāliḤ

A) Miracles associated with their birth

When Zaghwa, the mother of the prophet ṢāliḤ, became pregnant, a number of omens appeared on land and on sea. When he was born, on a Friday night in the month of Muḥarram, there was a great tumult in the desert and the mountains; angels descended and wild beasts, lions and rid-

⁶ Among the proverbs alluding to ṢāliḤ's she-camel are the following: "more ill-omened than Aḥmar of 'Ād" or "more ill-omened than Aḥmar of Thamūd", where Aḥmar refers to Qudār b. Sālif, the she-camel's killer, who at times is also called by his mother's name Qudayra. He is depicted as an anti-hero, whose egoism and his love for his own person and his narrow interests drove him to kill the she-camel with the ensuing destruction. For more details on these proverbs see, for example: al-Aṣbahānī, no date, 247, no. 339; al-Maydānī, no date, 2:187, no. 2031; al-Shībī 1982, 491, no. 301; al-Zamakhsharī 1381/1962, 1:176, no. 722; al-'Askarī 1988, 1:456, no. 1034; al-Yūsī, no date, 3:211; al-Aṣfahānī, 1988, 212, no. 289. A well-known saying is "I did not kill ṢāliḤ's she-camel", said by a person who protests his innocence; see al-Tha'libī 1977, 352.

The following are some of the proverbs which allude to the young camel born to ṢāliḤ's she-camel: "They were afflicted by the she-camel's frothing daughter", "it was for them like the she-camel's frothing daughter", "it was for them like the frothing young camel". These are used to refer to someone who brings death and misfortune to others, like the newly-born camel which after its mother was killed went up a mountain and frothed, bringing God's punishment down on Thamūd. For more details on such proverbs see, for example: al-Sadūsī 1391/1971, 44, no. 8; al-Bakrī 1983, 458, no. 215; al-Maydānī no date, 3:20, no. 20; al-Zamakhsharī 1381/1962, 2:211, no. 713.

ing animals prostrated themselves and thanked God. The idols of the tribe of Thamūd fell on their faces.⁷

Similarly, when Fāṭima the daughter of Asad (d. 626 CE), the mother of 'Alī b. Abī Ṭālib (d. 661 CE), was pregnant the ground shook under the tribe of Quraysh for seven days, rocks were flattened, and the idols were scattered and fell on their faces.⁸ When 'Alī was born, so it is related, the skies were radiant and the stars shone twice as brightly as before.⁹

B) The two men's physical similarity

The prophet Ṣāliḥ is described as bearded. It is related of him that after the she-camel was killed he was so beset with grief that his tears flowed down his cheeks and beard.¹⁰ According to another tradition he is described as possessing a heavy beard.¹¹ 'Alī, too, has been described as having a large beard which covered his chest.¹²

The prophet Ṣāliḥ is described as of medium height;¹³ the same is true of 'Alī.¹⁴

It is as if the Shī'ite sources wanted to tell us that God made Imāms similar to prophets in many respects, including their physical characteristics.

C) A radiant face

The prophet Ṣāliḥ's face is depicted as radiating light. No one could look at his face, so radiant was his beauty;¹⁵ 'Alī's face is also said to have been radiant.¹⁶

⁷ Al-Kisā'ī 1424/2004, pp. 89–90.

⁸ Al-Fattāl 1966, 1:78; Al-Qummī 1363/1943, p. 56.

⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰ al-Ashrafānī 2001, p. 97.

¹¹ Al-Rāwandī 1418/1997, p. 103, part 4, *ḥadīth* no. 91.

¹² Ibn Abī al-Dunyā 1408/1988, p. 108, *ḥadīth* no. 55.

¹³ Al-Rāwandī 1418/1997, p. 103.

¹⁴ Ibn Abī al-Dunyā 1408/1988, p. 108, *ḥadīth* no. 55.

¹⁵ Al-Kisā'ī 1424/2004, p. 91.

¹⁶ The light emanating from the faces of the Imāms is an important issue among Shī'ites, who believe that God created the Prophet Muḥammad and his descendants the Imāms out of His light (see: al-Kulaynī 1365/1945, 1:389, no. 1; 1:402, no. 5; 1:440, no. 3; 1:442, no. 10; 1:531, no. 6; al-Ṣaffār, 1404/1983, p. 20, no. 3; al-Daylamī 1412/1991, 2:404). According to Shī'ite tradition God created seventy-thousand angels out of the light of 'Alī's face. These angels will intercede on his and his admirers' behalf on the Day of Resurrection (see: al-Daylamī 1412/1991, 20:234–235), and that the heavens were also created from the light of 'Alī (see: al-Daylamī 1412/1991, 2:403).

D) Extensive knowledge

It is said of the prophet Ṣāliḥ that God gave him much knowledge and dignity.¹⁷ ‘Alī, too, like all the Imāms, was knowledgeable; in fact, Shī‘ites claim that he was the “most erudite of men” (*a‘lam al-nās*),¹⁸ whose knowledge was at least the equal of that of the angels and the prophets,¹⁹ if not superior to theirs, for he was able to renew and increase his knowledge,²⁰ so that nothing remained hidden from him.²¹

E) They understood the language of animals

Like Solomon, the prophet Ṣāliḥ is said to have spoken to animals. When he called on his people to obey God they are reported to have asked him to call on the lions to testify that he was to be believed, whereupon Ṣāliḥ raised his voice and addressed the lions as follows: “Oh lions, if I am the messenger of God to the people of Thamūd, come to me with the permission of God Almighty”. Then a huge lion appeared and said: “I am at your service, oh messenger of God”. A man of Thamūd accused him of being a sorcerer; the lion then turned towards the people of Thamūd and gave such a roar that they all ran into their homes and begged Ṣāliḥ to make the lion go away. Ṣāliḥ gestured to the lion and he left them.²²

In this tale Ṣāliḥ’s call to the lion is answered immediately. He calls the lion in the latter’s language. The lion does not harm him; in fact, it roars at his enemies and obeys his orders.

‘Alī, too, is said to have known the language of the beasts. In fact, Shī‘ites believe that their Imāms know the languages of all people and all other creatures as well.²³ It is therefore not to be wondered at that ‘Alī is depicted as speaking to animals, including lions. Al-Ḥārith al-A‘war²⁴ relates that he was in a place called Kunāsa²⁵ together with the Commander of the Faithful and a group of people when suddenly a lion appeared. The people took

¹⁷ Al-Kisā’ī 1424/2004, 91.

¹⁸ Al-Ṣadūq 1403/1983, 62, no. 9, whence al-Majlisī 1404/1983, 25:116, no. 1.

¹⁹ Al-Ṣaffār 1404/1983, 109, no. 2.

²⁰ Amir Moezzi 1994, pp. 71–72.

²¹ Al-Majlisī 1404/1983, p. 26, chapter 6: “the knowledge of heaven and earth, Paradise and the Fire was not concealed from them”.

²² Al-Kisā’ī 1424/2004, p. 93.

²³ Lobenstein 2003, p. 218.

²⁴ For details on him see: al-Ṭūsī 1415/1994, 94, no. 927-3; al-Ḥillī 1411/1990, 54, no. 8; al-Kishshī 1348/1929, pp. 88–89, no. 142–192.

²⁵ The name of a place in the city of Kūfa; for more details see: Yāqūt al-Ḥamawī 1399/1989, 4:481, s.v. “Kunāsa”.

fright and ran while the lion went up to 'Alī and stood before him. 'Alī then placed his hand on the lion's head and spoke to him as follows: "Go back whence you came, God willing, do not enter the House of the Hijra (= Kūfa) after today, and tell all the lions in my name that they should not do so either".²⁶ After 'Alī finished speaking the lion went away and disappeared.

In this tradition we see that the lion recognizes 'Alī and behaves towards him in a distinctly un-lion-like manner. He understands what 'Alī says to him and obeys him. The Imām is here represented as mediating between the animal and human worlds, thanks to his knowledge of the languages of each. The tradition also lets us know that an Imām's authority is not limited to mankind but extends to beasts as well.

F) A terrible roar in battle when danger looms

Of the prophet Ṣāliḥ it is said that he had a loud, fear-inspiring roar which he would use when facing the enemy in battle. His roar instilled terror in his enemies' hearts.

Shī'ite sources relate that there was a man descended from Shem, son of Noah, who attacked the people of Thamūd every seven years and took their possessions, until Ṣāliḥ came and gave a great roar, which so frightened the enemy that he fled and left the booty he had already taken.²⁷

On another occasion Ṣāliḥ roared at his own people, who refused to believe in his mission and would not obey God. They fled from him in terror.²⁸ 'Alī, interestingly enough, is reported to have had an impressive roar, too, which he used under circumstances very similar to those in which Ṣāliḥ used his.

It is related, for example, that the Prophet once sent 'Alī to the city of Amman to fight al-Julandī b. Karkara (or Karkar). A fierce battle between them ensued, in the course of which al-Julandī promised a youth by the name of al-Kindī that if he managed to capture 'Alī he would receive his daughter in marriage. Al-Kindī rode a white elephant and, in the company of thirty other elephants, attacked 'Alī. When they approached him 'Alī descended from his she-mule, walked up to a she-elephant and began to speak to it in a language which no human could understand. The moment he did this twenty-nine elephants turned around, attacked the pagan army

²⁶ Al-Rāwandī no date, 1:191–192.

²⁷ Al-Kisā'ī 1424/2004, p. 93.

²⁸ Al-Kisā'ī 1424/2004, pp. 93–94.

and drove it back to the gates of Amman. The she-elephant spoke to 'Alī and said to him: "We all believe in you and in the Prophet Muḥammad, except for this white elephant which al-Kindī is riding". 'Alī then produced his well-known roar, and the white elephant was immobilized with fear. This enabled 'Alī to cut off the elephant's head with his sword, and to capture al-Kindī.²⁹

This is not the place to discuss the numerous significant details contained in this tradition. Here we shall only mention 'Alī's fear-inspiring roar which he used in battle, just as ṢāliḤ did. It would seem that this was not deemed to be a normal human roar, but rather one of a special kind, granted by God to His prophets and Imāms for the purpose of instilling fear in the hearts of unbelievers who wished to do harm to God's messengers and rejected their mission.

G) Feeding the people

The prophet ṢāliḤ's she-camel provided the people with beneficial milk;³⁰ 'Alī, on the other hand, provided his people with beneficial knowledge and wisdom.³¹

H) Their place of burial

The location of 'Alī b. Abī Ṭālib's grave is a matter of some dispute.³² However, all Shī'ite sources are agreed that he is buried in al-Gharī, the site in the city of al-Najaf where his shrine is located. Shī'ites consider this location certain beyond doubt; Shī'ite sources explain that before his death 'Alī told his sons: "Bury me in this soil, in the tomb of my brothers Hūd and ṢāliḤ, may they rest in peace".³³

Numerous traditions relate that 'Alī's grave in al-Gharī contained the mortal remains of a number of prophets, among them ṢāliḤ and Abraham.³⁴

According to one tradition the Imām Ja'far al-Ṣādiq stated that "when 'Alī was put in his grave it was empty, and a loud voice was heard saying 'Verily the

²⁹ Ibn Shahrāshūb, 1379/1959, 2:311, whence al-Majlisī, 1404/1983, 41:77–78, *ḥadīth* no. 8; al-Nabbātī, 1384/1964, 1:97–98.

³⁰ Al-Kisā'ī, 1424/2004, 99; al-Jazā'irī, 1420/1999, 155; al-Ṭabrisī, 1415/1995, 5:299.

³¹ Al-Qummī, 1404/1983, 2:132; al-Jazā'irī, 1420/1999, 152; al-Majlisī, 1404/1983, 11:54, within *ḥadīth* no. 31.

³² For more information on this dispute, see Sindāwī, 2002–2003, pp. 126 ff.; Sindawī 2004a, pp. 2, 21–49.

³³ Al-Jazā'irī 1420/1999, 92; al-Ṭūsī 1995, 6:33, no. 66; al-Majlisī 1404/1983, 11:379, no. 4

³⁴ Al-Nabbātī 1384/1964, 3:122.

Commander of the Faithful was a worthy servant; therefore God joined him to His prophet, and so He shall do with the executors, so that even if a prophet should die in the Orient and his executor in the Occident, He shall join him". 'Alī is considered the Prophet Muḥammad's executor, and his tomb is thus deemed to serve as a burial place for prophets and their executors.

Another tradition has the fifth Imām, Muḥammad al-Bāqir (d. 732 CE) say: "No prophet was ever sent except with our authority and with the disavowal of our enemy". In other words, the Shī'ites believe that the prophet Ṣāliḥ was acquainted with the Imām 'Alī, and the other Imāms as well.³⁵ It is also part of the Shī'ite creed that an Imām can make contact with deceased prophets, whom they visit and who also visit them.³⁶

Thus 'Alī, who was able to contact all the prophets, would also naturally have been in contact with Ṣāliḥ, and would have known, according to Shī'ite belief, that he would be buried in the same grave.

Here again we see the Shī'ite tendency to link its own appearance with events in the far past, thus providing its creed a venerable antiquity. Ṣāliḥ knows that 'Alī will be buried with him in the same grave, and so indirectly provides proof of the existence of Shī'ism and its creed in the remote past. Another purpose of this tradition is to show that 'Alī's tomb in al-Gharī is an extraordinary site. This is the superficial meaning; these traditions also possess a deeper inner meaning, namely the spiritual link between 'Alī and the prophet Ṣāliḥ.

In contrast to these Shī'ite traditions, some Sunnī traditions place 'Alī's grave in Mecca,³⁷ near the Black Stone;³⁸ others say that it is to be found in the land of Hadramawt east of Yemen,³⁹ and still others locate it in al-Ramla.⁴⁰

I) Both ride a she-camel in Paradise

The attributes common to 'Alī and Ṣāliḥ, according to the Shī'a, are not limited to aspects of their earthly lives, but extend to the Day of Resurrection as well, where the two will meet. During their lifetimes they never met, since they lived many ages apart, but according to Shī'ite belief on the Day of Resurrection they will both ride in the same convoy. On that day

³⁵ Al-'Ayyāshī 1380/1960, 2:258; al-Ṣaffār 1404/1983, pp. 74–74, *ḥadīth* no. 1–9.

³⁶ al-Ṣaffār 1404/1983, p. 278, no. 12; Amir-Moezzi 1994, pp. 72–73.

³⁷ Ibn Kathīr 1985, p. 127; al-Tha'labī no date, 63.

³⁸ Al-Khaṭīb al-Baghdādī 2004, 64.

³⁹ Al-Ṭabrisī 1411/1990, 7:392; al-Ashrafānī 2001, p. 99.

⁴⁰ Al-Kisā'ī 1424/2004, p. 102. It should be noted that there are a number of shrines dedicated to the prophet Ṣāliḥ in the Holy Land, in al-Ramla, Acre, and elsewhere as well. For details see, 'Arrāf 1993, pp. 118–122.

they will also share a number of attributes. For example, both will ride she-camels. According to one tradition the Prophet is reported to have said: "Only four will ride on the Day of Resurrection, myself, 'Alī, āṭima and Ṣāliḥ; I will ride al-Burāq, Fāṭima my daughter will ride al-'Aḍbā' (the Prophet's she-camel),⁴¹ Ṣāliḥ will ride God's murdered she-camel, and 'Alī will ride a she-camel from Paradise, made of light, whose halter is made of sapphire, and he will wear two green garments".⁴²

According to this tradition the two will meet in Paradise, as part of the foursome Muḥammad, Fāṭima, 'Alī and Ṣāliḥ, whose exceptional status is symbolized by the fact that only they will ride on that day, in contrast to all other prophets and executors.

However, of the four, 'Alī and Ṣāliḥ appear to have the same standing, since they will ride in the same convoy. In other words, 'Alī is deemed to have the same rank as the best prophets.

The similarities between 'Alī and Ṣāliḥ's she-camel

Before enumerating the common attributes of Ṣāliḥ's she-camel and 'Alī, it should be pointed out that the Shī'a found numerous incidents, expressions and miracles in the stories about this she-camel, which made it very popular among the believers of all times and therefore engendered a tendency to endow 'Alī with similar attributes. The message behind this comparison is that 'Alī himself is one of God's miracles, just like Ṣāliḥ's she-camel.

A) *Place of birth*

According to Shī'ite sources 'Alī was born inside the Ka'ba, the Rock of God. For this reason he is called "Born of the Ka'ba" by the Shī'ites, since no other prophet or executor had this honor.⁴³ In this he is similar to Ṣāliḥ's she-camel which, as we saw above, came fully-grown and pregnant out of a rock at the request of the people of Thamūd.⁴⁴

⁴¹ Al-'Aḍbā' was one of the Prophet's she-camels; for more details see: Ibn al-Jawzī 1408/1988, p. 590.

⁴² Al-Jazā'irī 1420/1999, p. 93; al-Ṣadūq 1403/1982, p. 204, no. 20; al-Majlisī 1404/1983, 11:380, no. 6; al-Ṣadūq 1983, p. 361, no. 14.

⁴³ For more details on 'Alī's birth in the hollow of the Ka'ba see, for example: al-Majlisī 1404/1983, 35:7-9, *ḥadīth* no. 8-11; al-Jazā'irī 1420/1999, p. 91; al-Fattāl 1966, 1:76-77; al-Karājukī, 1410/1989, 1:255.

⁴⁴ Al-Jazā'irī, 1420/1999, p. 154; al-'Ayyāshī, 1380/1960, 2:20, no. 54; al-Majlisī, 1404/1983, 11:377, no. 3.

B) Foreknowledge of death

Prophets have knowledge of the occult, as do the Shī'ite Imāms, as shown, for example, by the traditions in which the prophet Ṣāliḥ predicts the she-camel's death, and in fact describes its killer to his people to warn them that that person would be the cause of their destruction.⁴⁵

In the case of 'Alī, too, his death was foretold by the angel Gabriel to the Prophet Muḥammad, who informed 'Alī that he would be killed by a scoundrel who made others wretched as well, by the name of 'Abd al-Raḥmān b. Muljam al-Murādī; the Prophet also gave a description of the man.⁴⁶ According to one account 'Alī shared this knowledge with Umm Ja'far, his concubine, while she poured water on his hands. He then took hold of his beard, brought it up to his nose, and addressed it as follows: "Woe on you, for you shall be colored by blood on Friday", and indeed he was struck before Friday was over.⁴⁷ The identities of both murderers, that of the she-camel and that of 'Alī, were known beforehand by Ṣāliḥ and 'Alī respectively.

The reader may well wonder, if both Ṣāliḥ and 'Alī knew the identity of the killers, why did they not take any steps to prevent the murders? Certainly Shī'ite writers were aware of this problem. Two answers are given to this question. According to one, both deaths were preordained by God, whose will could not be changed. Another answer was that 'Alī's martyrdom had a sublime purpose and as a result 'Alī had an exalted position in Paradise; therefore he did nothing to prevent his own murder. As for Ṣāliḥ, he did not take any steps to prevent the killing of the she-camel so that his people would deserve to be destroyed by God as punishment for their deed.

C) Incitement to kill 'Alī and the prophet Ṣāliḥ's she-camel

Another similarity between 'Alī and Ṣāliḥ's she-camel is the fact that in both cases it was a woman who incited to killing. In 'Alī's case the inciter was a woman named Quṭām bint al-Akhḍar al-Taymiyya, whose father and brother had been killed by 'Alī in the Battle of Nahrawān. This beautiful woman was the betrothed of her cousin 'Abd al-Raḥmān b. Muljam (d. 661 CE), to whom she said: "I shall not marry unless you give me three thou-

⁴⁵ Al-Tha'labī no date, pp. 41–43.

⁴⁶ Al-Majlisī 1404/1983, II:376, 393, I8:141, 27:52, no. 3; 28:58–59, 31:439, 31:440, 32:216, 35:61, 42:190, chapter 126, *ḥadīth* no. 1, 42:193–194, no. 10, 42:195, no. 13, 42:198, no. 17, 42:23, 42:238; al-Hillī 1408/1987, 237–238; al-Kūfī 1415/1994, p. 919; al-Irbillī 1381/1961, 1:428, 1:434; Ibn Shahrāshūb 1379/1959, 1:141, 3:III, 209.

⁴⁷ Ibn Abī al-Dunyā 1408/1988, p. 106, *ḥadīth* no. 44.

sand, a slave and a maid, and you kill 'Alī". 'Abd al-Raḥmān agreed to her demands.

As for the killing of Ṣāliḥ's she-camel, according to one tradition two women were behind that act, Ṣadūq bint al-Muḥayyā who offered herself to Miṣḍa' b. Mihraj and 'Unayza, an old woman who offered one of her daughters to Qudār b. Sālif. In another tradition Ka'b al-Aḥbār explains that a woman named Malkā caused the she-camel's death. This woman was the queen of Thamūd. When Ṣāliḥ's father became head of the tribe she was jealous. She then approached a woman named Quṭām, who was the lover of Qudār b. Sālif, and another woman named Qibāl, who was the lover of Miṣḍa'. The queen met with the two women every night and they all drank wine. One evening Malkā said to the two women: "If Qudār and Miṣḍa' come to you tonight do not submit to them. Instead say to them that the queen is sad because of the she-camel and because of Ṣāliḥ, and that you will not submit to them until they kill the she-camel". When the two men came the two women said to them what they had agreed to say. The men answered: "We will see to it that it is killed". They then left, with seven companions. They lay in wait for the she-camel as it stepped out of the water. Qudār hid beneath a rock that was on its way, and Miṣḍa' hid beneath another. When the she-camel passed by Miṣḍa' he shot an arrow which hit its thigh. Then 'Unayza came out and ordered her daughter, who was very beautiful, to unveil her face before Qudār and play music for him, whereupon he charged the she-camel with his sword, lay bare its hamstring and killed it.⁴⁸

Despite differences among the traditions concerning the killing of Ṣāliḥ's she-camel, clearly according to all accounts a woman was the prime mover in both events. The connection is even closer: according to one tradition the name of the woman who called for killing Ṣāliḥ's she-camel was Quṭām, the same name as the woman who wanted 'Alī killed. The identical names are surely no coincidence.

Quṭām bint al-Akhḍar is mentioned in numerous historical sources, and was in all likelihood a real person. As for the Quṭām associated with the killing of Ṣāliḥ's she-camel, it would appear that Shī'ite sources inserted her name in order to enhance the similarities between that event and the killing of 'Alī, as further proof for the Shī'ite believers of the legitimacy of 'Alī's rights as Imām and successor of the Prophet.

⁴⁸ Al-Jazā'iri 1420/1999, pp. 156–157; al-Ṭabrisi 1415/1995, 2:442–443; al-Majlisi 1404/1983, 11:391–393.

The motif of the woman inciting to kill 'Alī in Shī'ite sources is probably connected, not only to the story of Ṣāliḥ, but also to the death of John the Baptist, who was killed by Herod at the urging of Salome at a drinking party, and she in turn was incited by her own mother Herodia.⁴⁹

D) The killer depicted as a scoundrel

Shī'ite sources depict both 'Abd al-Raḥmān b. Muljam, 'Alī's killer, and Qudār b. Sālif, who killed Ṣāliḥ's she-camel, as the most wretched of men. According to tradition, the Prophet Muḥammad told 'Alī on a number of occasions that "the most wretched of the men of yore was the killer of Ṣāliḥ's she-camel, and the most wretched of the men of latter days is the man who will strike you with his sword, kill you, and make your blood flow down your beard".⁵⁰

In one tradition Ibn 'Abbās is quoted to the effect that 'Abd al-Raḥmān b. Muljam, 'Alī's murderer, was a descendant of Qudār b. Sālif who killed Ṣāliḥ's she-camel.⁵¹ 'Alī's killer is described in a number of traditions as either "more wretched than the killer of Ṣāliḥ's she camel" or "the most wretched of the wretched".⁵²

E) The time of death and the murderers' punishment

The people of Thamūd killed Ṣāliḥ's she-camel on a Thursday. After the deed was done Ṣāliḥ told them: "Enjoy the next three days,⁵³ Thursday, Friday and Saturday. The people's punishment then came on the morning of the fourth day, Sunday.⁵⁴ The angel Gabriel first came down and gave such a fearful shout that they all died. Then God sent down fire which burned them all.⁵⁵

'Alī, too, was struck down on a Thursday. After the deed he was taken and imprisoned. He died of his wounds after three days, on Sunday night.

⁴⁹ Sindawi 2004b, p. 42.

⁵⁰ Al-Ṣadūq 1387/1958, 1:295, 297; al-Majlisī 1404/1983, 42:190, *ḥadīth* no. 1, 10:227, 11:376, 31:440, 42:190, no. 1; al-Jazā'irī 1420/1999, 151; Ibn Ṭāwūs 1367/1947, 3; al-Ṣadūq 1983, 95; Ibn Abū al-Ḥadīd no date, 10:265; al-Ḥākim *no date*, 2:434, no. 1108–1196; al-Ḥillī, 1408/1987, 236–238; Ibn Qūlawayh 1399/1977, p. 263; al-Qummī, 1363/1943, p. 57; al-Ṣadūq 1397/1976, pp. 79, 110, no. 101; al-Kūfī 1415/1995, pp. 798, 919; al-Irbillī 1381/1961, 1:427, p. 435; Ibn Shahrāshūb 1379/1959, 1:140, 3:111, 309.

⁵¹ Al-Majlisī 1404/1983, 42:237–238.

⁵² Al-Rāwandī no date, 1:182; al-Ṣadūq, *al-Khiṣāl* 2:576, 607.

⁵³ Q 11:65.

⁵⁴ Al-Ṭabrisī 1415/1995, 5:298–299.

⁵⁵ Al-Ṭabrisī 1415/1995, 5:299.

His murderer, 'Abd al-Raḥmān b. Muljam was punished by having his hands and feet cut off. He was then thrown into a pit filled with petroleum and set afire.⁵⁶

To sum up, in both cases the act took place on a Thursday, the punishment came three days later, in the form of fire.

F) The son killed

Another point of similarity between the stories of Ṣāliḥ's she-camel and 'Alī is the killing of the son. In the case of 'Alī, his son al-Ḥusayn was killed at the battle of Karbalā' in the year 680 CE, and the she-camel's offspring, too, was killed by the people of Thamūd after they had killed its mother.

The reader may wonder why such an association was made between 'Alī and a she-camel. We must remember that according to the Shī'ite view this camel was a miracle from heaven, which God produced for Ṣāliḥ with the purpose of convincing his people to believe in Him. The same is true of 'Alī, who was, so Shī'ites believe, a "sign of God" (*āyat Allāh*), made manifest through His Prophet. 'Alī himself is quoted more than once as saying "Is there a sign greater than me?".⁵⁷ The connection between the two thus came quite naturally.

Conclusion

In the previous pages we have examined a number of similarities between 'Alī and the prophet Ṣāliḥ. The Shī'a, in its striving to glorify the figure of 'Alī b. Abī Ṭālib, found various appropriate materials in the biographies of the prophets, which it ascribed to 'Alī who, in their view, was the equal of the prophets. It did this in order to enhance his position as Imām, as the legitimate successor of the Prophet Muḥammad, and also in order to prove the antiquity of the Shī'ite faith.

One of the prophets whose biography contained numerous events that were deemed similar to events in 'Alī's life was Ṣāliḥ, especially the events surrounding his she-camel. Both the prophet and the she-camel share quite a few similarities with the Imām: 'Alī and the she-camel were both born inside a rock; the births of both 'Alī and Ṣāliḥ were accompanied by miracles and the two men were also physically similar; both had illuminated

⁵⁶ Al-Mas'ūdī 1417/1997, 2:409; Ibn Abī al-Dunyā 1408/1988, 107, *ḥadīth* no. 44.

⁵⁷ Al-Qummī 1404/1983, 2:132; al-Majlisī 1404/1983, 11:54, *ḥadīth* no. 31; al-Jazā'irī, 1420/1999, 151–152.

faces and both possessed great knowledge; both spoke the language of the beasts and both had shouts that instilled fear into their enemies, and both foretold their fate. 'Alī knew who would kill him, where and how, and Ṣāliḥ knew who would kill his she-camel, where and how.

Further similarities exist as well. In both cases it was a woman who incited to murder; in both cases the victim's son was also killed; the killers in both cases were "the most wretched of men"; the time of death, the killers' punishment, and the time of that punishment are also similar in both cases. Furthermore, the prophet and the Imām were buried in the same grave, and both will ride she-camels on the Day of Resurrection.

Clearly this degree of similarity cannot be a coincidence. Rather, it constitutes an example of the Shī'ite effort to demonstrate that 'Alī was the equal of the prophets.

A further motive for the many points of similarity between the prophet and the Imām may be the Shī'ite view that just as the prophets and their executors fought against injustice, so did the Shī'ite Imāms. 'Alī thus represents the struggle for social justice in which the prophets and messengers of God engaged before him. As the successor of these prophets, including the prophet Ṣāliḥ, he is in the Shī'ite view the inheritor of their fight for justice, as reflected also in many events in their lives.

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The Nişantepe Archive and the Hittite Royal Dynasty

Trevor BRYCE

School of History, Philosophy, Religion and Classics
University of Queensland
St. Lucia, Queensland 4072
AUSTRALIA
E-mail: t.bryce@uq.edu.au

Review article of S. Herbordt, D. Bawanypeck, J. D. Hawkins (2011), *Die Siegel der Grosskönige und Grossköniginnen auf Tonbullen aus dem Nişantepe Archiv in Hattusa*. Darmstadt/Mainz: Philipp von Zabern. xv + Pp. 308 + 60 Plates. ISBN 978-3-8053-4331-2 (Cloth)

During his 1990-1991 excavations at Boğazköy-Hattusa, Peter Neve, campaign director for the German Archaeological Institute, uncovered a large 'archive' of seal-impressed documents. Unearthed from within and outside the basement rooms of the so-called 'Westbau', on the site of Nişantepe, an outcrop of rock within Hattusa's Lower City, the archive consisted of 3410 clay bullae and so-called *Tonverschlüsse* (sealed clay fasteners once attached to leather bags or pouches), together with twenty-eight land-grant tablets and document fragments. The archive was originally housed on the upper storey of the Westbau, but its contents had been scattered when fire consumed the building. Hitherto only a few hundred Hittite sealings were known to us, from their appearance on bullae and other documents found both in Hattusa and at other sites in the Hittite-controlled world. The sheer size of the new archive was in itself sufficient to rank its discovery among the most important developments in the field of Hittite archaeology, and Hittite studies in general, over the last several decades. A preliminary examination of it made clear its potential not only for adding substantially to our knowledge of the types and usages of Hittite seals, but also for filling a number of gaps in our knowledge of Hittite history, particularly the genealogy of its ruling dynasty.

To provide some context for this: The earliest attested Hittite seals, dating to the late sixteenth and early fifteenth century, bore only Luwian

hieroglyphic symbols. But from c. 1400 B.C. digraphic royal seals began to appear. These contained inscriptions in two scripts, a centrally located hieroglyphic one recording the king's name and titles, surrounded, on the seal's rim, by one or more concentric rings of cuneiform text, which recorded the king's name, royal titles, sometimes his patron deity, and often the names of one or more of his forebears. Thus a seal of the king Mursili II bears the hieroglyphic inscription 'Great King Mursili', and in two rings around it the cuneiform text 'Seal of Mursili, the Great King, King of the Land of Hatti, Beloved of the Storm God, Son of Suppiluliuma, the Great King, King of the Land of Hatti' (Kat. 27).¹ The king sometimes shared seals with the reigning queen, who was generally his wife. On some seals, the queen's name appeared alone, and other seals were issued by princes and various palace officials. Many royal seals depict a winged sun-disc, used as a symbol of kingship, extending over the centrally-located hieroglyphic inscription. The same motif commonly appears on public monuments inscribed with hieroglyphic texts authored or commissioned by the king.

Among the seals known to us before the Nişantepe archive, several provide conspicuously important information about the Hittite royal dynasty. The most notable of these is the seal impression on one of the land-grant documents discovered during the excavation of Temple 8 at Hattusa in 1984. The sealing bears the name of a king called NIR.GÁL, equivalent to 'Muwattalli' (the cuneiform version of the name).² Another land-grant document from the same findspot is impressed with the seal of an Old Kingdom ruler called Zidanta (II). From the location, typology and language of the Muwattalli document, it became clear that this Muwattalli, attested in a number of documents previously assigned to a later period, was in fact the first Hittite king so called, reigning more than a century before his famous namesake who fought Ramesses II in the battle of Qadesh (1274).

In 1986, a new excavation of Temple 3 in Hattusa produced a number of impressions of a seal in the shape of a Maltese cross – now dubbed the cruciform seal.³ Ownership of the seal has been firmly assigned to Mursili II and his first wife Gassulawiya. Most importantly, its inscriptions provide the genealogy of a number of Mursili's royal predecessors, dating back to the early years of the Hittite Old Kingdom. On side *a*, the name of Mursili's father Suppiluliuma (I) appears, surrounded by the names of the Old Kingdom rulers Labarna (I), Hattusili (I), Mursili (I) and a king whose

¹ Kat. designates a Catalogue number in the book under review.

² See Carruba 1990, pp. 539–40.

³ Published by Boehmer and Güterbock 1987, p. 69 no. 214, with pl. 25.

name is not clear; on side *b*, Mursili (II)'s name is surrounded by Tudhaliya (I/II) (often considered the founder of the New Kingdom),⁴ his son [Arnuwanda I], Mursili's grandfather Tudhaliya (III), and a still problematic space. Several queens are listed in the genealogy – Nikkalmati (wife of Tudhaliya I/II), Asmunikkal (wife of Arnuwanda I), and after a gap Taduhepa; the seal leaves unclear the identity of Taduhepa's husband. We shall return to this below.

Around the same time as the discovery of the cruciform sealings, Neve's excavations in Hattusa brought to light a number of seal impressions bearing within the royal aedicula the inscription *Kuruntiya, Great King, Labarna, My Sun*.⁵ Kuruntiya is otherwise attested as a son of Muwattalli II, and a (half?)-brother of Urhi-Teshub who succeeded Muwattalli on the throne. After a brief reign (perhaps seven years), Urhi-Teshub was overthrown by his uncle Hattusili (III), who seized the throne and drove the deposed king into exile. But Kuruntiya remained in favour as Hattusili's protégé and was appointed by him ruler of the prestigious appanage kingdom Tarhuntassa (which for a brief time in Muwattalli II's reign had been the seat of the royal administration). This is evident from the treaty on a bronze tablet discovered in 1986 just outside Hattusa's Sphinx Gate.⁶ The treaty-partners are Kuruntiya and Hattusili's son and successor Tudhaliya IV. The 'Great King' title on Kuruntiya's seals have suggested that its owner made a successful bid for the throne of Hatti – for no ruler other than a Great King would dare use this title – thus restoring it to its rightful family line. Further evidence of this – or at least of Kuruntiya's imperial aspirations – came to light at a site called Hatip, located 17 kms southwest of Konya in southern Anatolia. Here, in 1993, a rock-cut relief and a hieroglyphic inscription were discovered. The relief depicts a striding god wearing a horned peak capital and short tunic, and armed with bow, dagger, and lance. The inscription reads: *Kuruntiya, the Great King, [the Hero], the son of [Mu]-watalli, the Great King, the Hero*.⁷ We shall consider below the possible historical implications of this inscription and the Kuruntiya sealings.

The book under review constitutes the second and final part of the publication of the archive's sealed clay bullae. The first part, containing the bullae of the princes and officials of the kingdom, was published in 2005 by S. Herboldt (see bibliography), one of the authors of the present volume.

⁴ It is uncertain whether there were one or two early New Kingdom rulers of this name; see Bryce 2005, pp. 122–3.

⁵ See Neve 1987, pp. 401–8, Abb 20a.b; 1993: Abb. 40–2. For the reading Kuruntiya in place of the Akkadogram Kurunta, see Hawkins in Herboldt 2005, p. 219.

⁶ Published by Otten 1988.

⁷ Published by Dinçol 1998.

Initially, publication of the kings' and queens' bullae was undertaken by the eminent Hittitologist H. Otten, from 1991 to 1999. The series of articles he produced⁸ ensured that much of the important historical and genealogical information derived from the bullae was made available to scholars long before the Nişantepe archive was published in its entirety. Because of his advanced years, Otten handed over the task of compiling a comprehensive edition of the bullae to Dr Herbordt and her colleagues. The third part of the archive, comprising the land-grant documents, is currently being prepared by C. Rüster and G. Wilhelm, and will appear in the *Studien zu den Boğazköy-Texten* series (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz) as *StBoT* Beiheft 4. A detailed excavation report by P. Neve will complete the documentation of the find.

The Nişantepe corpus of kings' and queens' bullae is made up of 2095 royal sealings impressed on a total of 2062 bullae, including the so-called *Tonverschlüsse*. Thirty-three of the bullae bear impressions of different seals – thus explaining why the number of sealings exceeds the number of bullae. All Hittite rulers of the so-called empire period, from Suppiluliuma I (c. 1350–1322) to Suppiluliuma II (c. 1207–), are represented in the archive, which also includes seals of individual queens, and seals on which the names of a reigning king and queen are paired. The seal-issues of queens of foreign origin have been included in the first part of the published Nişantepe material, which is devoted primarily to the sealings of princes and officials. In contrast to the princes' and officials' seals, those of the kings and queens are digraphic (with central hieroglyphic inscription surrounded by cuneiform rings) – with the exception of the 'Labarna seals'. Listed at the end of the catalogue (Kat. 149–191) and arranged according to typology, these are administrative documents which bear in hieroglyphic symbols the titles 'Great King' and 'Labarna', but do not specify the actual king in whose name they were issued. This particular seal-type was apparently first used in the second half of the 13th century, during the reign of Tudhaliya IV.

148 different seals are identified from their impressions in the corpus, 141 of them belonging to the empire period, which spans the reigns of the two Suppiluliumas and the kings between them (c. 150 years). It is thus clear from the archive (and from other sources) that multiple seals were produced for individual kings and queens in the course of their regnal careers – the 141 'empire seals' identified in the archive being distributed among ten kings (if we include Kuruntiya) and five queens. Some of the seals were transported from one part of the empire to another, no doubt as part of the bureaucratic equipment which accompanied scribes or other officials travelling on the king's business. This is illustrated by one of Tudhaliya's sealings

⁸ Refs given p. 1 n. 4.

in the archive (Kat. 110), which was impressed by the same stamp as a sealing discovered in Ugarit. In general, Herbordt notes that the seal material dates overwhelmingly to the 13th century, with the reign of Tudhaliya IV, whose sealings make up 33 per cent of the entire corpus, providing an administrative centre of gravity for the collection. Even kings who only briefly occupied the throne are well represented in the archive, by a relatively large number of issues – e.g. Urhi-Teshub (who reigned for c. seven years) and Arnuwanda III (whose reign lasted two or three years at most). What conclusions we can draw from these statistics will no doubt be the subject of much ongoing scholarly discussion. A small number of the Nišantepe seals belong to the period before Suppiluliuma I (Kat. 1–7), the oldest being a seal of an anonymous Tawananna (the Hittite title for the reigning queen). This seal, dating probably to the 15th century, provides a chronological starting-point for the archive, enabling us to calculate for it an overall time-span of c. 250 years.

The royal seals are analysed from a number of perspectives. Chapter II (*Fundsituation und Rekonstruktion des Befundes vom Nišantepe-Archiv*) undertakes a detailed examination, with accompanying tables, of the distribution of the sealings throughout the Westbau complex, categorised according to the names of the seal-owners. Chapter III (*Siegelpraxis*) discusses the nature of the seals and the functions which they served. Most of the bullae on which they were stamped were conical, though cylindrical and other shapes, including an animal-head, make an occasional appearance. The bullae were apparently attached to wooden tablets by a string, and hung loosely from these tablets, whereas the so-called *Tonverschlüsse* which are distinguished from them were tied tightly to the necks of leather sacks or bags, thus sealing them up, as shown by the impressions of such items on the reverse sides of the labels.⁹ It is noteworthy, as Herbordt observes (p. 25), that in the Nišantepe archive, as elsewhere in the Hittite capital, sealed bullae are far more numerous than sealed tablets; apart from the land-grant documents with ‘Tabarna seals’,¹⁰ only a few seal-bearing tablets of the empire period have been found. Herbordt reasonably concludes that in the majority of text-genres, documents for which a seal was required as validation were written on wood, especially legal and administrative documents.

The various seal-types and the images and motifs which they depict are discussed in Chapter IV (*Siegeltypen und Siegeldarstellungen*). Though only

⁹ As illustrated, e.g., by Plate 57, items 157.1 (RS), 158.1 (RS), 159.1 (RS).

¹⁰ These will be included with the land-grant documents in C. Rüster’s and G. Wilhelm’s publication of the third part of the archive.

one original royal seal has so far been discovered,¹¹ it is clear that Hittite kings used stamp seals almost exclusively for impressing documents, the one known exception being a cylinder seal of Tudhaliya IV (Kat. 101). Under the sub-heading *Formale Aspekte der Siegelkomposition* (pp. 46–7), Herbordt notes that the royal seals are in the main purely inscription-seals and discusses the nature and arrangement of the cuneiform and hieroglyphic elements depicted upon them. Pictorial elements (e.g. human, divine, and animal figures) are comparatively rare.

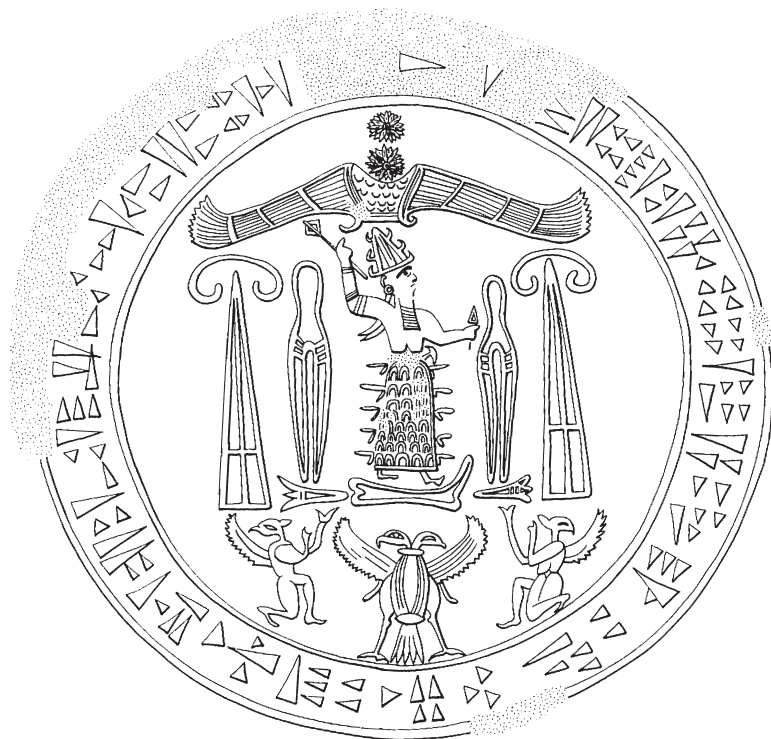
This provides a context for Herbordt's treatment of the seals' iconography (pp. 53–64) (following a discussion by J. D. Hawkins of proposed reconstructions of two unusual seals of Tudhaliya IV). A significant development in the iconography, in the early 13th century, is the first pictorial representations of a Great King – on the seals of Muwattalli II. This was noted by K. Bittel, Neve's predecessor at Hattusa, who observed that Muwattalli is also the first known Hittite king to be represented pictorially on rock monuments, as illustrated by his depiction on the rock relief at Sirkeli, located on the Ceyhan river in southeastern Anatolia. A second (heavily mutilated) figure in another relief at Sirkeli is thought to represent one of Muwattalli's sons, Urhi-Teshub or Kuruntiya. In Bittel's opinion,¹² this coincidence between rock- and seal-image was not a matter of chance, but reflected the expression of a new idea which was bound up with the king's wish for immortalisation. It is possible that this iconographic innovation had some underlying political or propagandistic motive, perhaps connected with Muwattalli's shift of his royal seat to Tarhuntassa in southern Anatolia and his showdown with Ramesses II at Qadesh. At all events, the establishment of Muwattalli's reign as the starting-point for the depiction of Great Kings on their seals represents an important stage in Hittite sigillography. Scenes depicting the king in the embrace of a god become a regular feature of pictorial representations on both seals and rock monuments and other stone surfaces. Wearing close-fitting skull-cap and carrying the curved staff known as the *kalmush*, the king is apparently depicted in these representations in his role as chief priest on the Hittite realm and the gods' deputy on earth. 'Embracing seals' are attested for the reigns of Muwattalli, Urhi-Teshub, Hattusili III and Tudhaliya IV. Seven of Muwattalli's seals with this motif appear in the Nişantepe archive (Kat. 39–45, Abb. 15 a–f).

Among the most visually impressive of the seal issues in the archive are the large and richly embellished seals of Tudhaliya IV, the so-called 'display

¹¹ A seal of Mursili II found in Ugarit (ref. p. 45 n. 146).

¹² Cited and quoted by Herbordt, p. 53 n. 168.

seals' (*Prachtsiegel*). These are distinguished by a number of features, including their size (up to 7 cm in diameter), their elaborate royal cartouches, with wings surmounted by *two* sun-discs, and beneath the aedicula the representation, unique to Tudhaliya, of a double-headed eagle flanked by two griffin-headed kneeling demons (Kat 89–135, Abb. 20 a-e, discussed by Herbordt pp. 62–4).



'Display Seal' of Tudhaliya IV (Kat. 96, illustration b, p. 63). A winged double sun-disc surmounts the central hieroglyphic inscription in which Tudhaliya is represented by a mountain god above a stylised upturned boot. The symbols on either side read 'Great King, Labarna' on the left and 'Labarna, Great King' on the right. The royal aedicula is supported by kneeling demon figures flanking a double-headed eagle. The cuneiform legend around the seal's outer rim reads (with restorations): 'Seal of Tudhaliya, Great King, King of the Land of Hatti, Hero, Beloved of the Weather-God of Nerik'.

Tudhaliya's reign was characterised by a substantial redevelopment of the Hittite capital and the nearby rock sanctuary Yazılıkaya, perhaps the most sacred monument in the Hittite world, where depictions of the king

are presented together with representations of multiple gods and a range of divine symbols. Tudhaliya's reign was a time of great cultural and material display, when the king consciously projected his image as a powerful, sophisticated, divinely endorsed ruler – as the empire entered its final period of decline and collapse. The iconographically rich 'display seals' fit appropriately within such a context.

In Chapter V, D. Bawanypeck provides detailed commentaries on the individual seal legends (*Kommentar zu den Siegellegenden*), which are correlated with the Catalogue numbers and incorporate a discussion of the seal-types with which the legends are associated. In Chapter VII (*Chemische Analysen*), G. Schneider presents the results of a chemical analysis of the clays on which the seals were impressed. Twenty-four bullae from Boğazköy were selected for analysis of their chemical composition. The purpose of the examination was to determine the origins, local or non-local, of the material of which the bullae were composed, and whether the bullae themselves originated within the Hittite capital or beyond it.

In Chapter VI (*The Seals and the Dynasty*), J. D. Hawkins discusses the genealogical information contained in the seal legends, taking account also of information provided by earlier seal-discoveries, including the cruciform seal. The Nişantepe seals offer a small amount of new evidence relating to the royal dynasty, though many of the problems of its genealogy remain unresolved. Much of the relevant material contained in the archive has already been published in preliminary editions by Otten and incorporated into a number of historical and genealogical studies by other scholars of the Hittite royal dynasty. Hawkins' chapter provides a general reappraisal of the situation from the present standpoint, and in this respect is a valuable contribution to the volume. I will confine myself here to brief comments on several of the questions and issues which Hawkins raises in relation to the royal dynasty and the extent to which the evidence of recent times contributes to their resolution.

In his discussion of the genealogy of Suppiluliuma I, Hawkins revisits the question of whether there was a recent predecessor of Suppiluliuma called Hattusili (who would thus have been the second king of that name) and if so, what his relationship with Suppiluliuma was. His existence was concluded from a retrospective reference to a king of that name in the so-called Aleppo treaty (early 13th century), drawn up by Muwattalli II with Talmi-Sharrumma, Hittite vassal ruler of Aleppo.¹³ It was once suggested that this Hattusili was the father of Suppiluliuma. But the matter appeared

¹³ See Bryce 2005, pp. 140-1.

to have been resolved by a seal from the Nişantepe archive in which a king called Tudhaliya (III) was identified as Suppiluliuma's father (Kat. 8). Even so, 'Hattusili II's' paternity was still asserted by Ph. Houwink ten Cate, in an article which provides Hawkins with his starting-point for a re-examination of the question. Hawkins' reappraisal takes into account discussions by a number of other scholars (Forlanini, Carruba, Freu, Soysal)¹⁴ and information provided by the seals from the Nişantepe archive and other sources. Unfortunately, the recent evidence adds nothing to a resolution of the question of what M. Astour referred to as 'the phantomatic Hattusili', who still, as Hawkins says, refuses to go away – though he has yet to convince us that he ever existed. Despite Houwink ten Cate's closely argued case, the identification of Suppiluliuma's father as a king called Tudhaliya in the Nişantepe archive seems secure. But it is not without complications.

A related matter that emerges from the Nişantepe seals is Suppiluliuma's pairing on one of his issues with a 'Great Queen' called Henti, identified as the daughter of a 'Great King' (Kat. 14). If, says Hawkins, the 'Great King' affiliation is to be taken literally, then who *is* this 'Great King'? Arnuwanda I (which would make Henti Suppiluliuma's aunt) or Tudhaliya III (which would make her his sister)? Neither would have been a probable marriage-partner of Suppiluliuma, a point which Houwink ten Cate emphasises as part of his complex case for identifying 'Hattusili II' as Suppiluliuma's father. Three queens are in fact associated with Suppiluliuma in the texts – Taduhepa, Henti, and Tawananna. It was originally widely believed that the first of these was Suppiluliuma's mother, wife of Tudhaliya III, who must have outlived her husband and retained her status as reigning queen (in the standard Hittite manner) after his death. But as Hawkins points out, the matter is complicated by the appearance in the Maşat archive of seal impressions on which a king Tudhaliya (sc. Tudhaliya III) is paired with a queen *Sà-tà-tu-ha-pa* = Satanduhepa. Though some scholars have equated Satanduhepa with Taduhepa, the two are almost certainly to be distinguished – the former the wife of Tudhaliya and mother of Suppiluliuma, the latter Suppiluliuma's first wife. Henti would thus have been his second wife, who was perhaps banished by Suppiluliuma to make way for his third wife, the Babylonian princess called Tawananna in the texts.¹⁵ That still leaves unresolved the matter of the identification of Henti in Kat. 14 as daughter of a 'Great King'. The only plausible explanation so far suggested is that of F. Imparati (cited by Hawkins, p. 89 n. 458), who has

¹⁴ Refs provided by Hawkins in the footnotes to p. 85.

¹⁵ See Bryce 2005, pp. 159–60.

demonstrated that the identification DUMU.LUGAL ('son/daughter of the king') could in fact be used as a courtesy or inherited title, one which might be conferred outside direct royal descent.

The archive has produced almost seventy impressions from five seals in which Suppiluliuma and 'Tawananna' are paired, thirteen impressions from two seals pairing her with Suppiluliuma's son and successor Arnuwanda II, and thirty-five impressions from seven seals pairing her with Arnuwanda's brother and successor Mursili II. This notorious foreign queen retained her position after her husband's death through Arnuwanda's short reign and the early years of Mursili until her banishment by Mursili. It is assumed that she adopted the name Tawananna as a personal name alongside her original name after her marriage. Her original name was tentatively read 'Malnigal' This was based on the reading of the cuneiform word 'Malnigal' on a long-known seal of unknown provenance, where the name Mursili appears on the outer cuneiform ring followed by a queen's name beginning *Ta*-[...]. Hawkins (p. 97) cites and agrees with M. Salvini's rejection of the centre inscription as a queen's name, and accepts his suggested reading of *Ta*-[...] in the outer ring as *Ta[nuhepa]*. A queen of this name is paired with three kings, Mursili II and his successors Muwattalli and Urhi-Teshub, his son and grandson respectively.

The distribution of the paired seals between the first and third of these kings is complicated by the fact that Urhi-Teshub assumed the name Mursili as a throne-name (thus Mursili III). This has long been known, and is illustrated in the archive by an almost fully preserved impression of the king's 'great seal' (Kat. 55) and another almost identical to it (Kat. 56). Indeed, some scholars have questioned whether Tanuhepa (Danuhepa) was a wife of Mursili II at all (she would have been his second wife, married to him after the death of his first wife Gassulawiya), who makes no mention of her in his texts. Singer adopted the view first enunciated by H. G. Güterbock that Tanuhepa was not the wife of Mursili II but was married to his successor Muwattalli, whose wife is otherwise unknown. Whether or not she was Muwattalli's wife or his stepmother, she became embroiled in a dispute with him, apparently over acts of profanation which she had committed, and was placed on trial by the king and banished. There is a striking similarity between this event and its outcome and that which befell Tawananna, stepmother of Muwattalli's father. Both events are recorded together in a prayer subsequently delivered by another of Mursili's sons, the future Hattusili III,¹⁶ who absolved himself from any involvement in

¹⁶ Singer 2002, pp. 97–201.

Tanuhepa's expulsion. As did Urhi-Teshub, Muwattalli's son (by a concubine) and first successor.

The coincidence is, I have always believed, too close to be entirely credible. There may well be more to the Tanuhepa episode than is currently evident. But that is a matter for discussion elsewhere. In any case, Tanuhepa was restored to favour by Urhi-Teshub, and the evidence from the seals indicates that she once more held the status of reigning queen. The circumstances of all this are entirely unknown to us. The seals provide us with no direct evidence to settle the question of whether Tanuhepa originally held power as the wife of Mursili II, and indeed by their demonstration that Urhi-Teshub was also called Mursili, have complicated the matter further. Nonetheless, an epigraphic criterion proposed by T. Beran and accepted by Hawkins would – if valid – enable the seal-issues of the two Mursilis to be clearly distinguished.¹⁷

A couple of further points of interest emerge from the Muwattalli sealings in the archive. Firstly, it is clear from Kat. 39 in particular that Muwattalli like Urhi-Teshub/Muwattalli III had an alternative Hurrian name – in his case Sharri-Teshub. Hawkins (p. 95) notes that the evidence suggests that this seal was used posthumously, which means that 'it must have been in use at the end of his life, and thus *Sharri-Teshub* was not a "personal name" discarded in favour of a "throne name" *Muwatalli*, but simply an alternative name in the system of double names.' As Hawkins also points out, the double-name system would lend further weight to the identification of Kuruntiya (Muwattalli's other known son) with the man otherwise known as Ulmi-Teshub, ruler of Tarhuntassa, who concluded a treaty with Hattusili III.¹⁸ One of the witnesses of the treaty, identified under his Hurrian name Tashmi-Sharruma, can now be firmly identified with Hattusili's son and successor Tudhaliya IV. It is clear that Tudhaliya used his double name both before and after his accession, as confirmed by its appearance on two of his 'Great King' issues in the Nişantepe archive (Kat. 110 and 111). A second point of interest of Kat. 39 along with Kat. 40 (seals of Muwattalli) is that both were reused during at least the first part of Urhi-Teshub's reign, when Tanuhepa was paired with Urhi-Teshub. Hawkins suggests that this was because of transactions they were validating which were begun

¹⁷ Beran's proposal cited by Hawkins (p. 91 with n. 477) is that the name Mursili (II) on the sealings was always written with the *li* dextroverse (except for the cruciform seal), and the name Mursili (III) with *li* sinistroverse. The division of Mursili sealings in the Nişantepe archive, where the identity of the king is established by the genealogy of the cuneiform legend, is consistent with this proposal.

¹⁸ See Bryce 2005, pp. 270–1.

in Muwattalli's lifetime and concluded under his successor. I wonder, however, whether there may have been some political motivation behind their reuse – something to do with the political volatility of Urhi-Teshub's short reign, as recorded by his uncle Hattusili – rather than the more prosaic (but quite possibly correct) reason suggested by Hawkins.

The two seals of Kuruntiya in the archive (Kat. 136 and 137) with the title 'Great King' raises the question, referred to above, of the use of such a title by a member of the royal family, or anyone else for that matter, who is not otherwise attested as a Great King. Did Kuruntiya actually occupy the throne of Hatti for a brief time? If so, he must have seized it from Tudhaliya who subsequently regained it. An alternative possibility, which takes account of the Hatip inscription in which Kuruntiya again appears as a 'Great King', is that Kuruntiya may have used Tarhuntassa, where he had been appointed as ruler by Tudhaliya's father Hattusili, as a base from which to launch a campaign for re-establishing his own branch of the royal line in Hattusa.¹⁹ The kingdom of Tarhuntassa almost certainly extended northwards into Classical Lycaonia and Cappadocia, and included the site of Hatip, which lay close to modern Konya, within its boundaries. The title 'Great King' was an assertion of Kuruntiya's claim *in absentia* upon the Hittite throne, and the location of a number of his seals in Hattusa may indicate not that he had actually seized the throne, but had supporters in the city who helped prepare his way for it with documents legitimating his claim and bearing his seal. This is pure speculation, but is perhaps as good a guess as any in explaining the enigma of the Kuruntiya sealings in the archive and other findspots in the city.

The second half of the book under review contains a detailed catalogue of the royal bullae found at Nişantepe. The catalogue begins with the anonymous Tawananna bullae and concludes with the Labarna issues, followed by two non-royal bullae which bear a cuneiform inscription but no seal impression (Kat. 192-193). Each sealing is given a primary catalogue number, with duplicates identified by secondary numbers, the best preserved examples heading each list. The individual specimens are identified also by Bo inventory numbers (= Boğazköy excavation find-no; e.g. Bo 90/365 = 1990, find no. 365), as well as by their size and state of preservation. In each case, the listing is accompanied by a transcription (with restorations) of the text, complementing the transcription and translation provided at the head of the entry under the seal-owner's name. Summary details of the individual items, including inventory number, nature of the piece, shape, dimensions,

¹⁹ For further development of this point, see Bryce 2011, pp. 28–9.

find-spot are provided in a 'Fundortliste', which complements the Catalogue. Following this are two concordances of Catalogue and Inventory numbers, and a set of sixty Plates which provide photographs and/or line-drawings of the each of the sealings and many of their duplicates.

Though the Nişantepe archive has produced only a modicum of new historical information, and has contributed little to the solution of some of the longstanding problems associated with the Hittite royal genealogy, the find is none the less of considerable significance from a number of points of view. Many of the royal sealings unearthed from the Westbau were previously unknown, and those that were known were often fragmentary with little if anything preserved of their cuneiform legends. That is a deficiency which the archive has done much to repair. The publication of the kings' and queens' bullae is a superb achievement, meticulous in its presentation and thorough in its comprehensive description and analysis of the sealings. Along with the first volume of the Nişantepe material, the present volume provides an essential reference work for anyone seriously engaged in research on the Hittites and the peoples with whom they had close political, commercial, and cultural contacts.

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BOOK REVIEWS

Naomi F. Miller, 2010, *Botanical Aspects of Environment and Economy at Gordion, Turkey* (Gordion Special Studies V; Museum Monograph 131), Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology. xii+Pp. 272 CD included. ISBN 978-1-934536-15-5 (Cloth).

Archaeobotanical monographs are relatively rare, particularly from sites in Anatolia. This eagerly awaited volume by Naomi F. Miller on the archaeobotanical evidence from Gordion, based on the 1988 and 1989 field seasons, is a valuable contribution to the field. Gordion is famous as the home of the Phrygian king Midas and as the site where Alexander the Great cut the Gordion knot before his conquest of Asia. This volume is unique in its breadth. Miller discusses the environment and economy at Gordion by integrating wood charcoal and charred seed analyses from the Middle Bronze Age to Medieval period based on over 200 hand-picked wood charcoal samples and over 250 flotation samples.

The volume begins by introducing the archaeological background of Gordion, outlining the stratigraphical and cultural context of the material studied. Chronologically these samples chart Gordion's history from the Hittite Empire through the Phrygian period to the Hellenistic then Medieval period. Miller gives the project its archaeobotanical focus by highlighting the key research questions to be examined through the plant macroremains. The 2000 year sequence of material enables Miller to investigate long term trends in vegetation history of the surrounding Sakarya valley, the climatic and human impacts on the environment. Of a more economic nature the charred seeds can give insight into the intensity of land use, the relative importance of agriculture to pastoralism in the Gordion economy, the use of irrigation and the agricultural catchment of Gordion within the region. Gordion had two known dramatic population shifts, the Phrygians migrated from the southern Balkans to Anatolia in the 9th Century BC and later the Celts (Galatians) settled at Gordion around 250BC. Touching on the archaeologically tricky issue of ethnicity, Miller examines whether these population movements influenced the agropastoral economy and in what way archaeobotany can contribute to issues of cultural identity.

Having placed Gordion in its archaeological context, Miller provides the environmental and agricultural setting of the site based largely on botanical surveys and ethnographic investigations of modern land use in the Sakarya valley conducted by Miller and members of the Gordion team. This chapter in itself is a valuable contribution to research into agricultural land-use practices. In particular, the anecdotal information on irrigated and unirrigated wheat and barley yields under different rainfall conditions and the activity schedule of the modern planting year are especially useful.

For those interested in establishing archaeobotanical research programmes at other sites, Miller has included a detailed description of her methodology, describing the onsite sampling strategy and the laboratory techniques for both the hand-picked charcoal and flotation samples. The rationale behind each procedure is

explained and problems of representativeness of the samples are discussed which permits the reader to evaluate the applicability of these techniques to their own work. Analysis of hand-picked wood charcoal samples is discussed separately to the charred seeds from the flotation samples. Material from the three burnt buildings is considered separately to samples from general occupation debris (hearths, pits, floors, and collapse deposits).

Wood charcoal analysis identified that the main building timber as pine and that the open steppe woodland showed signs of a probable human induced vegetation change over time. Miller uses seed:charcoal (g:g) ratio as a guide to fuel use (dung or wood) and the wild:cereal (#:g) ratio to determine animal food source (pasture or crop foddering). With these relatively straightforward ratios, Miller determines that from the Bronze Age to Medieval periods, the Gordion economy was primarily pastoral except during the Middle Phrygian period, when settlement at Gordion was at its greatest extent. In this period farming became more important relative to pastoralism. Similarly, there was a slight increase in the availability of wood fuel during the Middle Phrygian period compared to other periods which may indicate oak woodland management at this time. In other periods there was greater reliance on dung as a fuel supplement. Miller integrates the archaeozoological evidence with the botanical data to show that there was a similar shift in animal remains from pastoral to agricultural indicator species in the Middle Phrygian period. After this period the economy was primarily pastoral even into the Medieval period when new irrigated summer crops were introduced.

In outlining her approach to the flotation analysis, Miller explains that her interpretive and analytical frame work is guided by the assumption that all charred deposits, apart from burnt buildings, are primarily the remains of combusted fuel and that animal dung was the main source of this fuel. This hypothesis dictates the way in which Miller interrogates her data and influences the conclusions available. To this end Miller combines all pit, hearths, floor, and collapse samples by period and reduces the flotation samples to weights of charcoal, cereals and number of wild seeds. Having analysed over 250 samples from 175 different contexts and identified over 150 different plant taxa for this publication, a lot of detail appears to be lost by this consolidated approach. This methodology may also have prevented integrating the archaeobotanical data with the archaeology of Gordion. It would be interesting to apply a multivariate statistical technique, like correspondence analysis, to this dataset in tandem with the ratios used. Multivariate statistics could help test Miller's initial assumptions as well as explore sample variation throughout the sequence in more detail and see if there are other trends in the data not identified by the charcoal, cereal and weed seed ratios. Doubtless this would be a monumental task, but it could be potentially informative. The beauty of Miller's publication is that she has included all the results of charcoal and flotation analysis in the appendices for the specific purpose of enabling other researchers to test different interpretive frameworks in a wonderful example of truly open scholarship.

The volume is well written in an easy to understand manner which should be accessible for both archaeobotanists and non-archaeobotanists alike. Photographs of common crop seeds and pencil drawings of wild and weedy seeds, including unknown taxa, are included in the appendix. The majority of the volume is given over to extensive appendices that include the step by step laboratory protocol for processing flotation samples, the wood charcoal identification criteria used in this

work, the results of Miller's vegetation survey of the Gordion region, the seed identification and ecological information of wild and weedy seed taxa and the complete wood charcoal and flotation results listing the composition of each sample. The vegetation survey and the charcoal and flotation results are also included as Excel versions on a CD at the back of the book together with seed measurements of the crop species. As an added extra, Miller has included a pdf pamphlet of photographs of Gordion and the surrounding region on the CD.

As well as being an archaeobotany report, this volume also has a sense of being a personal account of Miller's more than twenty-year involvement in archaeology at Gordion. Her affinity with the site and knowledge of the surrounding landscape provides extra depth to her analysis. This volume reinforces the importance of involving specialists in the field as part of the archaeological team rather than solely as recipients of disembodied bags of processed material divorced from its original context and landscape. Miller's Gordion is a reminder not just to archaeologists organising field teams but also to specialists of the additional benefits of leaving the lab and being involved in fieldwork.

Catherine Longford
Department of Archaeology
The University of Sheffield, UK
E-mail: c.longford@sheffield.ac.uk

James B. Pritchard, ed. Foreword by Daniel E. Fleming, 2011, *The Ancient Near East: An Anthology of Texts and Pictures*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, Pp. 664 + 307 halftones. ISBN 9780691147253 (Cloth), ISBN 9780691147260 (Paperback).

It may seem strange to read a review of James B. Pritchard's *The Ancient Near East: An Anthology of Texts and Pictures* more than 60 years after its first publication in 1950. Given its 2011 reissue by Princeton University Press, now is a good time to evaluate its reuse in today's context. Alongside a variety of more up-to-date anthologies of ancient Near Eastern literature (such as the three volume *Context of Scripture*, any of the numerous anthologies now published by Blackwell, the *Writings from the Ancient World* series or internet corpora such as *The Electronic Text Corpus of Sumerian Literature*), it is interesting to consider what role this new edition of Pritchard's classic can play when students can readily find more up-to-date translations through a Google search.

This new edition of Pritchard's anthology is not a reissue of his magisterial *Ancient Near Eastern Texts Relating to the Old Testament (ANET)*. Rather, it is a new, combined edition of two abridged versions of the work that included selections from *ANET* as well as illustrations from his *The Ancient Near East in Pictures Related to the Old Testament (ANEP)*. The first volume of *The Ancient Near East* had been printed in 1958; the second volume was conceived of as a supplemental sequel, presenting new texts and illustrations. Other than a new foreword by Daniel Fleming and a clearer map of the Near East in the front matter, the reissue does not attempt to update these two volumes. However, by combining the con-

tents of the two previously separate books, and altering the subject categories slightly, it is now much easier to locate specific translations.

In the new forward, Fleming explores the value of presenting these out-dated translations to a contemporary audience, despite the fact that the field has changed tremendously since their initial publication. For Fleming, the authoritative role that Pritchard's anthology has assumed in the training of new scholars in the field warrants its continued use. The iconic stature of the scholars who provided translations, such as Albright, Kramer, and Oppenheim, and the importance of their contributions to the field, makes this work a useful means of introducing students to some of the major figures in the field. As Fleming notes, the differences between contemporary scholarship and the works of these seminal figures makes it unlikely that this type of project could be successfully updated. Fleming explains: "Their translations reflect a degree of conceptual and technical mastery that we do not easily match today. Collectively, study of the ancient Near East has progressed, but individually, few scholars today match the systematic knowledge and accompanying perspective that many of these past figures possessed. So far as a translation may be more than the sum of its parts, it is still worth reading these masters." (xxiv) For the most part I would agree with this sentiment. However, from a practical perspective, some of the translations (such as Ginsberg's rendering of "The Baal Cycle") may be too idiosyncratic to be of much use to student readers and at times the translations are arguably too creative.

Whereas the value of the translations seems apparent, I am less convinced that there is much value in presenting the images in this form. While those illustrations originally selected by Pritchard are interesting and many are in some ways iconic to Near Eastern studies scholars, I cannot imagine that much use will be made of them in the form presented here. There are 307 individual pictures, reprinted as high quality black and white images at the back of the book. For the most part, the illustrations look good. But presented as they are here, in a context-less jumble, makes this a difficult resource to take advantage of. The lack of substantive explanation probably makes some of the images next to useless for non-specialists. The excavation photographs will be especially difficult to use by those not trained to "read" this kind of information, such as image 297, which is a plan of Shechem without a legend or images 301–302, of the Holy of Holies at Arad, which will probably not look like much more than a bunch of stones to non-archaeologists. In other instances, the format of the presentation limits the utility of the photographs, such as the Standard of Ur (image 97) and the Balawat Gates (image 98), which are spread awkwardly across two pages. Given the ready availability of significantly higher quality images on the internet, I cannot imagine how these images will be of much use to anyone, besides a bored student browsing through the back of the book in class.

In some ways, it is not entirely clear who the audience for this reissue is. Certainly it is too complex to be of interest to very many truly popular readers. It does retain the marginal notes that allow easy comparison to potentially relevant Old Testament passages, so perhaps a popular reader with an interest in the Near Eastern context of the Bible. (Unfortunately, this also supports an older approach to these texts that sees the value in their study being derived from their relationship to the Bible rather than in their own right.) For undergraduate students, this book would work very well, as it has in previous versions, as a trustworthy source

of translations in surveys of the ancient Near East. To my mind, however, there is one major limitation in its use in this manner and that is in its lack of up-to-date bibliography. Bibliographically, this book is a dead end for students and it will not help lead them further into the scholarship of the field. While there are marginal notes that lead readers to the more extended scholarly apparatus available in *ANET*, this is by now 40 years out of date. Other, more recent anthologies (such as *The Context of Scripture*) do provide useful bibliography and more significant critical notes and thus provide a more complete introduction to the scholarship of the Near East. Likewise, the very brief introductions in *The Ancient Near East* will make some of the presentations obscure to non-specialist readers, but also forces students to engage directly with the translation, rather than relying on paraphrases.

Returning to the initial question of this review, I believe that there is a role that this reissue of *The Ancient Near East* can play in 2011. I cannot think of any single volume that provides such a breadth of ancient Near Eastern primary sources in one convenient volume. As Near Eastern studies as a discipline becomes further and further specialized, I think that collections that present Egyptian, Mesopotamian, Syro-Palestinian, Anatolian, and South Arabian materials together are valuable. It is worth thinking about the literary productions of these cultures on their own right and in a comparative framework. The cost of this edition is reasonable, and the size of the volume means that it can be easily integrated into classes. As a teaching tool, it can conceivably help students link concepts and ideas from the variety of survey and upper level courses that make up a typical program of ancient Near Eastern studies.

Kevin McGeough
Department of Geography (Archaeology)
University of Lethbridge
E-mail: mcgekm@uleth.ca

S. L. Shead, 2011, *Radical Frame Semantics and Biblical Hebrew: Exploring Lexical Semantics* (Biblical Interpretation Series 108). Leiden & Boston: Brill. xxvii + Pp. 378. Hardback, ISBN 978-90-04-18839-6

The present book, a revised version of a doctoral thesis conducted under the supervision of Prof. Ian Young and presented to the University of Sydney in 2007, is a contribution in the field of lexical semantics, specifically aimed at creating a framework for lexical semantic analysis of Biblical Hebrew based on recent linguistic theories in the fields of structural semantics, cognitive semantics, and construction grammars. Such a system of lexical semantic analysis is further expected to contribute to future electronic representations of Biblical Hebrew (pp. 177–178). The book is divided into three major parts. The first two, “Foundations for lexical semantics” (pp. 11–142) and “Critiquing and enhancing FrameNet” (pp. 143–178), deal with the various semantic theories and suggest critiques and improvements. The third part, “Frame semantics and Biblical Hebrew” (pp. 179–333), covers the application of these semantic theories to Biblical Hebrew. This is largely based on

the methods and concepts of the FrameNet lexicography project (FrameNet is an English lexicography project at the International Computer Science Institute in Berkeley, California, and is based on Charles J. Fillmore's Frame Semantics theory). These three parts are preceded by an introduction (pp. 1–9) and followed by a conclusion (pp. 334–338), a comprehensive list of works cited (pp. 339–356), and indices of subjects (pp. 357–367), biblical references (pp. 368–371), authors (pp. 372–375) and Hebrew terms (pp. 376–378).

Chapters 2–5 (pp. 13–142), which form the first part of the book, present a comprehensive description of the various relevant linguistic theories, including a detailed explanation of the terms and concepts employed in each. At times this may appear unnecessary and superfluous, since these are discussed extensively elsewhere. However, this seeming fault may actually be regarded as an advantage, because these chapters can serve well as an overall introduction for those interested not in general linguistic treatments of semantics but only in their specific application in Biblical Hebrew. Moreover, the author does not adopt these semantic theories as they are, but comments on them, and makes his own choices and adaptations in his own work accordingly. Concerning cognitive semantics, for example, he states that he more specifically prefers “the general cognitive approach of William Croft and D. Alan Cruse (Croft and Cruse 2004), who explore and refine Fillmore's ideas within their larger framework” (p. 35). Along these lines too, chapters 6 and 7 (pp. 145–178), which form the second part of the book, are dedicated to ‘re-framing’ the theory of semantics and ‘re-constructing’ the theory of grammar, or more specifically syntax. One example of such ‘re-framing’ is the preference for a relative graded distinction of core and peripheral frame elements over a binary one (p. 151). Other examples are the need to consider context in the semantic interpretation of sentences, especially in respect of null constituents (p. 154ff), the need to include information on metaphors (p. 159ff), the choice of ‘construction role labels’, namely labels that identify the roles of sub-constructions in the larger constructions, instead of their ‘grammatical functions’ (p. 164), and more.

Chapter 8 (pp. 181–192), which opens the third part of the book, offers some remarks and considerations on the application of the theoretical framework to Biblical Hebrew. These include a discussion of the development of a prototype software called HebrewNet as a frame-based annotation of the Masoretic text (pp. 187–192). Chapters 9–11 demonstrate an application of the theoretical framework to words related to the Hebrew root *חקר* in relation to the semantic area of “exploring” and “searching” (pp. 193–333). Despite the author's disapproval of treatments of the root *חקר* in several Biblical Hebrew dictionaries (chapter 11, pp. 323–333), this root, its range of meanings, and the range of meanings of tangent roots, can generally be traced in these dictionaries and others (incidentally, it is rather odd that the author chooses to discuss “*חקר* in the lexica” in chapter 11 at the end of the third part of the book instead of introducing it before his own discussion in the preceding chapters 9–10, pp. 193–322). So the contribution of chapters 9–10 lies not in their indicating various meanings but in the discussion of their complexity, their more exact and accurate nuances, the range of participants involved, and the difficulties involved in the attempt to represent it all through cognitive frames. This discussion also demonstrates the huge volume of work required of scholars and software experts who may want to adopt such methods and apply them to the entire Biblical Hebrew lexicon. Shead is clearly aware of this; he states, “...the same

level of meticulous analysis and detail perhaps cannot feasibly be applied to the entire BH lexicon..." (p. 321). Another important observation by the author is that his system "requires definite decisions to be made — and with an ancient language, of course, definite conclusions are often difficult" (p. 322). One can only join the author in affirmation of his words, and add that definite decisions are often problematic with living languages as well. The author is also absolutely right in remarking in his conclusion to the book, "Each model has strengths and weaknesses..." and "no model is ideally suited to all" (p. 334–335).

As stated in footnote 9 on p. 5, the linguistic theories presented and discussed in the first two parts of the book are mostly explained and demonstrated by English examples. This is somewhat unfortunate. The book could have benefitted from more examples from Biblical Hebrew, since its main contribution relates to that language, as well as its potential readership.

The book is generally well organized and set. However, the author's choice of vowel transcriptions, although found in other scholarly studies, may be debated. One problematic example is the transcription of three types of Hebrew *-i-* vowel: *-i-*, *-ī-*, and *-î-*, the *-i-* representing a short vowel, the *-ī-* a long vowel not followed by the vowel letter *Yod*, and the *-î-* a long vowel followed by the vowel letter *Yod*. Similarly problematic is the triple representation of *-u-*, *-ū-*, and *-û-*. While such a transcription can work well for *-o-* representing a *qamats qatan*, *-ô-* representing a *holam haser* and *-ô-* representing a *holam male*, it is not as suitable for the other two vowels noted, where the indication of a long vowel lacking a vowel letter is based on reconstruction and does not reflect a true language reality. Another debatable practice is the omission of representation of the double pronunciation of the six *begadkefat* consonants.

This book joins the quite short list of pioneering works dedicated to a linguistics-based electronically oriented semantic description of Biblical Hebrew. Its main contribution is its taking another step forward toward the creation of a useful and significant computational-linguistic processing of Biblical Hebrew semantics.

Tamar Zewi
Department of Hebrew Language
University of Haifa, Haifa 31905, Israel
E-mail: tzewi@univ.haifa.ac.il

J. D. Douglas and Merrill C. Tenney, General Editors, revised by Moisés Silva, 2011, *Zondervan Illustrated Bible Dictionary*, Pp. 1571 + 500 colour photographs, 75 colour maps. ISBN 978-0-310-22983-4 (Hardback).

Zondervan Illustrated Bible Dictionary (ZIBD) has boasted that it is currently the "most accurate and comprehensive one-volume Bible dictionary available" and at this present time, they would be correct. ZIBD has had quite a long and successful history, appearing first in 1963, and subsequently edited and reprinted several times throughout the decades. My initial impression was that this dictionary was a basic blending, copy-paste operation of some of its predecessors — the Zondervan Encyclopaedia of the Bible (ZEBD) and the New International Bible Dictionary

(NIBD) — but to my surprise and delight, it is a completely new work. Boasting 1571 coloured pages, this latest edition of the dictionary has had a complete overhaul, with every article reappraised and revamped. Many of these previous entries were re-written, and in addition to the original 5,400 entries 1,800 new submissions appear, giving the ZIBD a impressive total of over 7,200 entries. These new entries contain contemporary archaeological information gleaned from the excavations at numerous Biblical-affiliated sites, whilst other somewhat dated entries have been revised to incorporate current information which, had it been left in its present form, would be rendered erroneous. Smaller articles were often appropriated from the revised edition of the Zondervan Encyclopaedia of the Bible (ZEB) with subsequent, minor editing taking place before inclusion in the ZIBD, thus as stated in the introduction "...may be regarded to some extent as an abbreviated version of its multivolume cousin (ZEB)" (p. v).

In addition, ZIBD is printed in complete colour, on matte paper, with 470 contemporary images from photographer James C. Martin, and also incorporates exceptionally functional, clear maps. Some of the images, however, are fairly ineffective; for example, page 486, contains an image of a rather unimpressive almond branch, when I'm sure there are other more significant entries that could be maximised with an image. Yet, besides this small issue, the dictionary doesn't assault ones senses or monopolize the pages with a plethora of photographs and maps, but they are thoughtfully scattered throughout the work to give the reader a more accurate idea of the subject material in its context and enhance their understanding with these visual aides.

One might ask, who is the intended audience and is it worth purchasing?

The majority of the intended audience would comprise of new students commencing biblical studies who need basic information, laymen, pastors and intermediate students —, that need a prompt, but not an entire essay on the subject matter, would find this book a saviour. However, owing to its weight of 2.6 kilograms (!), it would be arduous to carry around the dictionary — unless you plan on some weightlifting or self-defence on your way to class! Readers may be interested to know that Amazon has also released a Kindle (an electronic reader) version of the ZIBD. For those fortunate enough to own one of these handy little devices, ZIBD can be kept on your person at all times. Essentially, though, the ZIBD is a reference tool with quick, concise lead-in entries on a myriad of topics.

There are also many other exceptionally useful inclusions within the ZIBD. The front of the dictionary has a pronunciation key (page vii) for Hebrew words, and the abbreviations (page x-xii), including general books of the Bible and the Pseudepigrapha. Each Hebrew article has the pronunciation of the word, and every entry contains the alternate spellings — which also directs the reader to cross-references within similar categories for example- flax; see plants, which Bible version i.e. KJV, NIV, RSV etc. and the corresponding passages which contains the word.

What is really practical about ZIBD is that the entries of the Biblical books such as the Book of Jeremiah are abridged in an overview/side-bar in a shaded square comprising of — the author of the book, the historical setting, the purpose and the contents of the book, which is adequate for the layman and beginner to grasp and more than sufficient for the intermediate and pastor reminder.

I found it quite interesting that none of the entries attribute an author, but, when perusing the introduction this issue becomes clarified. The revisionist Moisés Silva explains that owing to the extensive amount of editing done on the original articles from ZEB and ZEBD, attributing these new articles to their original authors would be misleading and rather than making arbitrary decisions it was decided that all articles would be unsigned. Some people may find this irritating, but the most part, the rationale is understandable.

Overall, I thoroughly enjoy using this Biblical Dictionary, and will continue to do so. Students will find the cross-referencing exceptionally useful, and the articles were excellent for a memory prompt. The entries are recent, and the maps are also very clear—not cluttered with writing of irrelevant places and great to get ones head around. The images of the biblical sites assist the reader to get a feeling for the region. Although somewhat weighty it is well worth the investment.

Kendall Reilly
Classics and Archaeology
School of Historical and Philosophical Studies
University of Melbourne
Victoria 3010, Australia.
k.reilly@pgrad.unimelb.edu.au